



lancaster general plan

# environmental justice element

# appendices

City of Lancaster

Final Draft  
February 2022





**City of Lancaster**

HOUSING, ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE, AND SAFETY ELEMENTS

# **APPENDIX EJ-A: DISADVANTAGED UNINCORPORATED COMMUNITIES (DUCS)**

## **DISADVANTAGED UNINCORPORATED COMMUNITIES (DUCS)**

Government Code Section 65302.10 requires that all general plans identify and analyze Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities (DUCs) within or adjacent to a city's sphere of influence (SOI). DUCs are defined as inhabited unincorporated areas with 10 or more residential units and a median household income (MHI) that is less than 80 percent of the statewide MHI. (Please see the end of this appendix for key terms and abbreviations used in the discussion.)

People who live in DUCs often face legal, financial, and political barriers that contribute to regional inequity and infrastructure deficits. Engaging these residents and their communities in long-range planning programs is intended to provide for more equitable and efficient delivery of services and infrastructure systems, including but not limited to sewer, water, and fire protection. As of 2020, no DUCs were under consideration for annexation by the City of Lancaster.

### **Identification of Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities (DUCs)**

According to consolidated data as of 2021, the MHI in California is estimated at \$71,228.<sup>1</sup> Three areas within Lancaster's SOI—as listed below and shown on Figure A-1—have been identified as DUCs, with a MHI of less than \$56,982. Additional unincorporated areas within the City's SOI exist, but they are not defined as DUCs due to either an annual MHI that exceeds the minimum or because the areas have fewer than 10 dwelling units adjacent or in close proximity to one another, as defined in Government Code Section 65302.10(a).

#### **DUC 1, East Antelope Valley (Census Tract 9100.01, Block Group 2)**

The East Antelope Valley DUC (Figure A-1, DUC 1) spans the width of the city, from 110th Street West to 120th Street East, and includes most of the SOI north of the city. This expansive fringe DUC encompasses 76,700 acres and contains approximately 1,718 residential units (all but four are single-family homes) with 4,401 residents. The median household income is \$47,679.

Most of DUC 1 remains undeveloped, with scattered agricultural uses and rural single-family homes. Residential and commercial development are primarily found within Antelope Acres. The Los Angeles County General Plan 2035 (adopted in 2015) and Antelope Valley Area Plan (2015) identify Antelope Acres as a rural town center, with areas designated as Rural Commercial (CR) to provide services and local employment opportunities to residents. Residents of Antelope Acres have expressed concern about encroaching urbanization and wish to remain an unincorporated rural community with a unique identity. Rural residential designations cover most of Antelope Acres to reflect the area's existing density and to maintain a large minimum lot size that reflects desired community character.

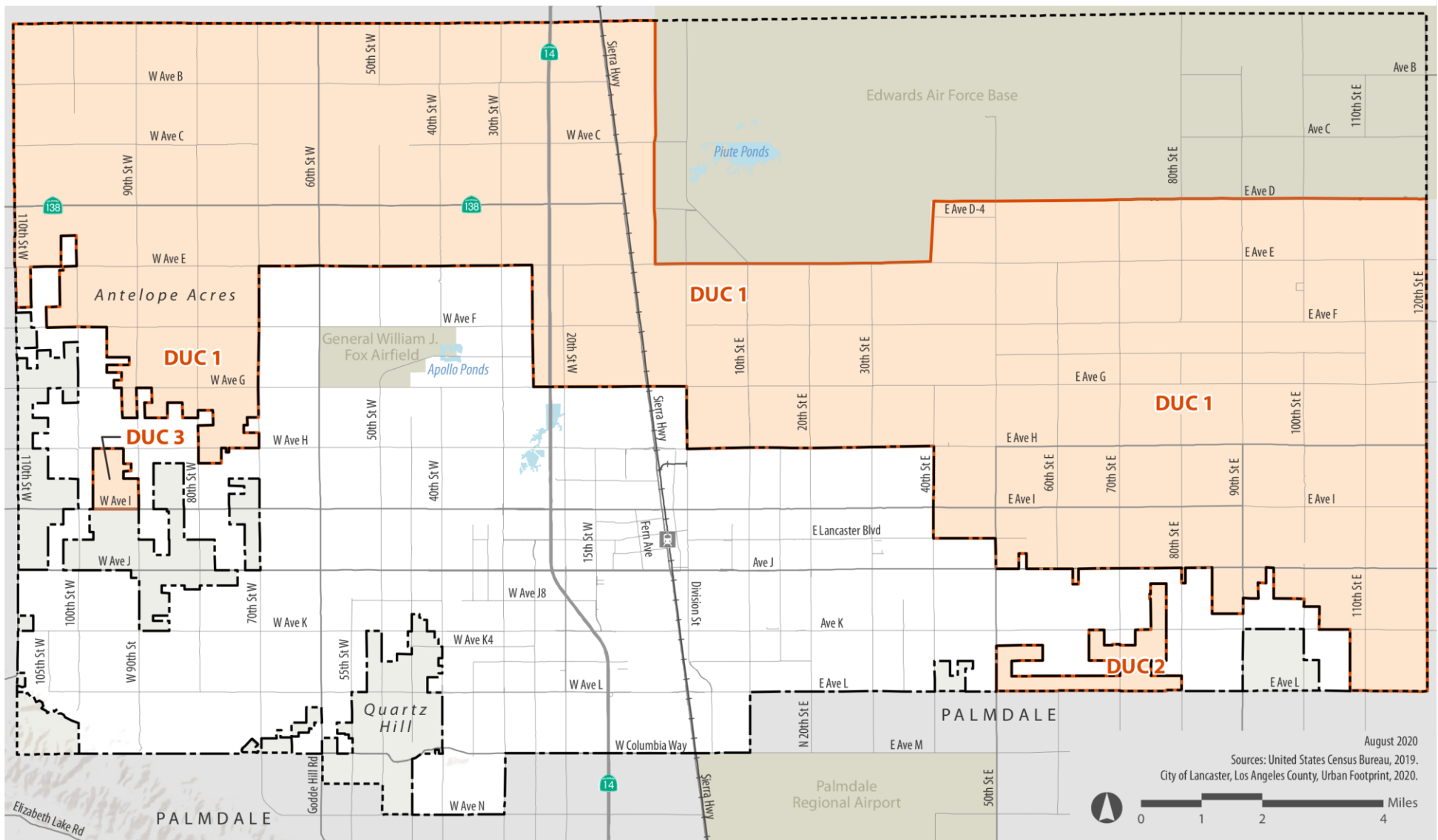
#### **DUC 2, Lancaster K (Census Tract 9002.01, Block Group 1)**

Lancaster K DUC (Figure A-1, DUC 2) is a small unincorporated area between 50th Street East and 80th Street East, north of East Avenue L. This irregularly shaped DUC covers 1,183 acres, contains approximately 36 single-family dwelling units with 80 residents, and has a MHI of \$44,643.

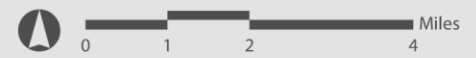
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<sup>1</sup> 2014-18 American Community Survey 5-year estimates

**Figure A-1: DUC 1, East Antelope Valley**



August 2020  
 Sources: United States Census Bureau, 2019.  
 City of Lancaster, Los Angeles County, Urban Footprint, 2020.



**Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities (DUC)**

DUC Communities

**Base Map Features**

- City of Lancaster Boundary
- Sphere of Influence
- Railways and Metrolink Station
- Airports and Military Installations

Most of DUC 2 remains undeveloped, with scattered agricultural uses and rural single-family homes. The Los Angeles County General Plan 2035 designates this community as either Rural Land 10 (RL10), with a maximum density of one residential unit for each 10 gross acres of land, or Rural Land 20 (RL20), with a maximum density of one residential unit for each 20 gross acres of land.

### **DUC 3, Lancaster 97th St W (Census Tract 9009, Block Group 1)**

Lancaster 97th Street West DUC (DUC 3) is located on the west side of Lancaster, north of West Avenue I. This small, 406-acre DUC contains approximately 10 single-family dwelling units and 17 residents. The median household income is \$56,574. Most of DUC 3 remains undeveloped, with dispersed rural single-family homes. The Los Angeles County General Plan 2035 designates this entire area as Rural Land 2 (RL2), with a maximum density of one residential unit per two gross acres of land.

## **Infrastructure**

### **Water**

Many retail water districts and mutual water companies (MWC) serve the Lancaster area. All water is sourced from either groundwater, imported water from the Antelope Valley-East Kern Water Agency (AVEK), or a combination of both. AVEK, through the State Water Project, is the single wholesale supplier of water in the region and is also a retailer of untreated water for agricultural purposes. The largest purveyor serving the City and SOI is the Los Angeles County Waterworks District 40 (LACWD).

Most existing residential development within DUC 1 receives water service. Land Projects MWC, Olsen A. Berto MWC, and Sundale MWC serve most of Antelope Acres, while several small water retailers serve other developed areas within DUC 1. However, undeveloped portions of DUC 1 and all of DUC 2 and

DUC 3 receive no water service. Residents and business operators have private on-site wells or have water trucked in for use.<sup>2</sup>

### **Wastewater**

Los Angeles County Sanitation District 14 (LACSD) owns, operates, and maintains the local wastewater trunk system and the Lancaster Water Reclamation Plant (WRP), which treats wastewater for irrigation, agriculture, urban reuse, wildlife habitat, maintenance, and recreational impoundments throughout the Antelope Valley. Wastewater lines that feed into the trunk lines and regional system are owned, operated, and maintained by the City of Lancaster. Almost all developable lands within the DUCs lack a community wastewater collection and treatment system; interestingly, the wastewater treatment plant is located within DUC 1 (Figure A-2). Homes and businesses without community sewers rely upon septic systems for sewage processing.

Prevailing soil conditions in the Antelope Valley are generally amenable to use of septic systems. All on-site wastewater treatment systems, including septic systems, must comply with public health and safety regulations that dictate their construction and installation.<sup>3</sup>

### **Stormwater and Drainage**

For flood control purposes, the City and SOI are within the jurisdiction of the Los Angeles Flood Control District. The DUCs contain no public stormwater or drainage infrastructure. Although some catch basins and gravity main stormwater sewers are near DUC 2 and DUC 3, roadside ditches represent the primary means within each DUC to manage stormwater. Like most places in the Antelope Valley Watershed, storm drains discharge into vacant desert land.<sup>4</sup>

Large portions of DUC 1 and parts of DUC 2 fall within flood zones, as shown in Figure A-3. These flood-

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<sup>2</sup> LACountyWaterworks\_2015 Integrated Urban Water Management Plan for the Antelope Valley

<sup>3</sup> LACounty\_gp\_2035\_deir

<sup>4</sup> LA County Public Works

prone areas consist mostly of undeveloped parcels and scattered agricultural uses.

## Fire Protection

The Los Angeles County Fire Department (LACFD) provides fire prevention and protection services to Antelope Valley residents and businesses, which includes the City and SOI. LACFD emergency units are dispatched as needed to incidents anywhere within the service territory based on distance and availability.

Most lands within the DUCs are located within moderate fire hazard severity zones, as illustrated in Figure 4. However, the desert scrub vegetation throughout the area has a low level of combustion due to the type and spacing of plants.

LACFD's goal is to have a fire station within 1.5 miles of all fully developed urban areas. The nationally recognized guideline is a five-minute response time in urban areas, which is usually achieved within a 1.5-mile distance. The DUCs are not considered urban, and most areas are outside of a 1.5-mile distance. Fire Stations 33, 112, and 130 serve DUC 1. Fire Station 112 in Antelope Acres is the only station in Lancaster staffed entirely by "paid on-call" fire fighters known as Call Fire Fighters (CFF). Thus, Fire Station 130 accompanies all of Fire Station 112's calls. DUC 2 is served by Fire Station 135, and DUC 3 is served by Fire Station 130. Fire stations routinely respond outside their first-due areas since many incidents require multiple response units from two or more stations.<sup>5</sup>

## Service Deficits

### Water

As of 2021, the DUCs experienced no water service deficiencies. Los Angeles County Waterworks Districts' (LACWD) 2015 Urban Water Management Plan estimates a 36 percent increase in water usage for residential land uses in District 40 from 2020 to 2035.

District 40 comprises eight regions within the Antelope Valley and serves approximately 208,000 people through 57,000 metered connections. Despite the increase, no water service deficiencies are expected, as supply is expected to be 10 percent higher than demand through the same period.<sup>6</sup>

The California Department of Water Resources recently awarded AVEK over \$1.2 million in Proposition 1 grant funding to meet increased demand and stabilize supply. The project will increase resiliency against drought, State Water Project supply shortages or interruptions, major disasters such as earthquakes, and climate change impacts through increased efficiency of banking programs. Additional benefits include reduced reliance on the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta, improved water quality, and supporting the local economy through affordable housing and economic development.<sup>7</sup>

As the DUCs develop, water purveyors must comply with Government Code Section 65589.7, which requires water purveyors to "grant a priority for the provision of water and sewer services to proposed developments that include housing units affordable to lower-income households." Existing water service in DUC 1 could be expanded to meet the needs as new development occurs. While DUC 2 and DUC 3 lack water service, these communities are adjacent to LACWD service areas, which makes the extension of water services more feasible.

The Los Angeles County Waterworks District charges a connection fee for obtaining water services. The fees vary depending on the size of the meter, size of the property, frontage dimension, and the required fire flow protection. Fees are determined on a case-by-case basis due to these varying factors. The connection fee is set at an adequate rate, reflective of the factors above, in order to provide ongoing services.<sup>8</sup>

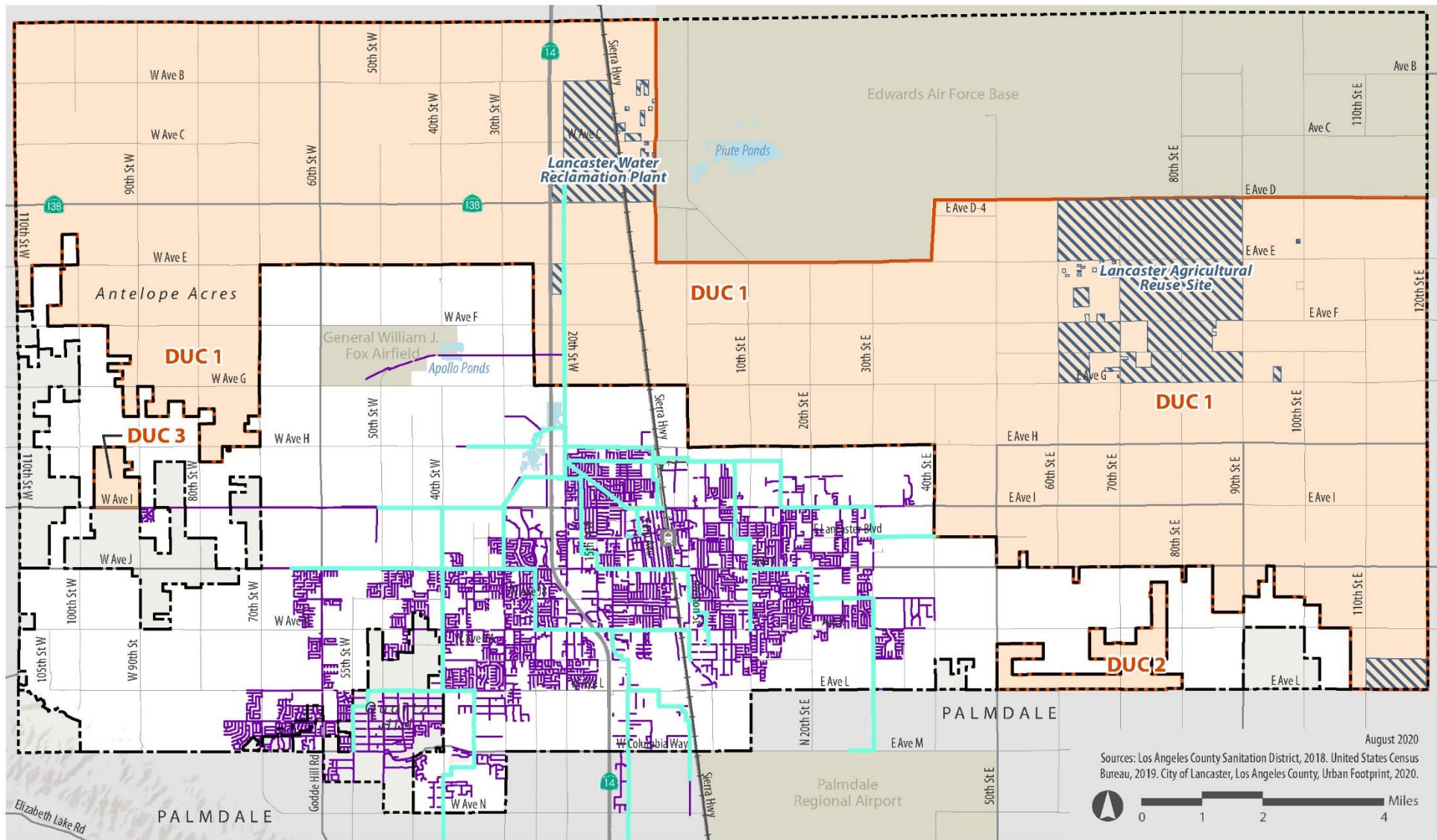
<sup>5</sup> GP2030 Master Environmental Assessment

<sup>6</sup> LA County Waterworks 2015 Integrated Urban Water Management Plan for the Antelope Valley

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.waterworld.com/drinking-water/infrastructure-funding/article/14178820/antelope-valleyeast-kern-water-agency-awarded-more-than-123m-in-grant-funding>

<sup>8</sup> LA County Waterworks District

**Figure A-2: Sewage Collection Network**



August 2020  
 Sources: Los Angeles County Sanitation District, 2018. United States Census Bureau, 2019. City of Lancaster, Los Angeles County, Urban Footprint, 2020.



**Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities (DUC)**

DUC Communities

**LA County Sanitation District No. 14**

Wastewater Service Areas

Existing Sewer Lines

**Lancaster Infrastructure**

Existing Sewer Lines

**Base Map Features**

City of Lancaster Boundary

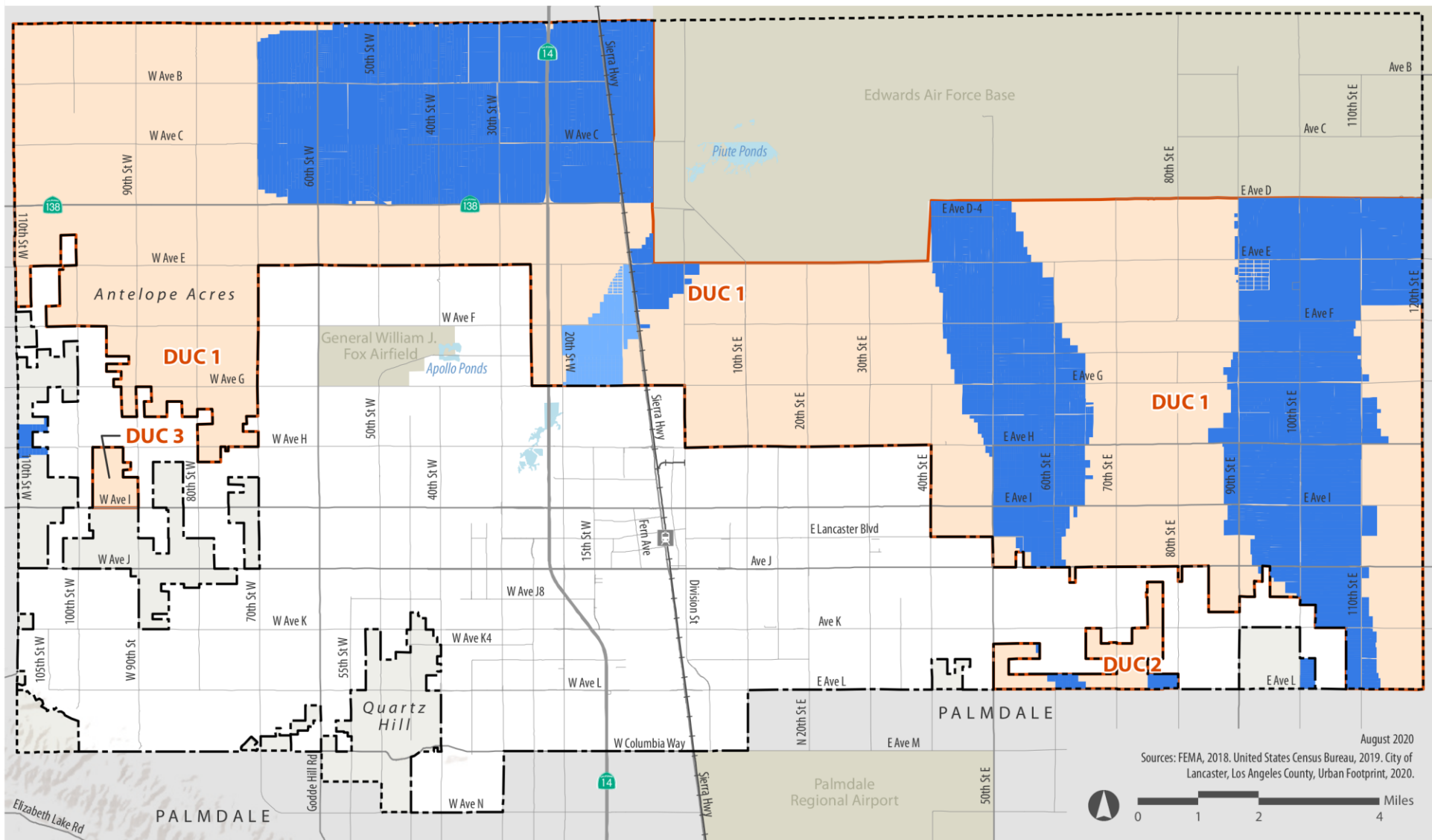
Sphere of Influence

Railways and Metrolink Station

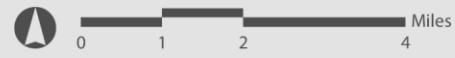
Airports and Military Installations



**Figure A-3: Flood Risk Areas (DUC Only)**



August 2020  
Sources: FEMA, 2018. United States Census Bureau, 2019. City of Lancaster, Los Angeles County, Urban Footprint, 2020.



**Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities (DUC)**

DUC Communities

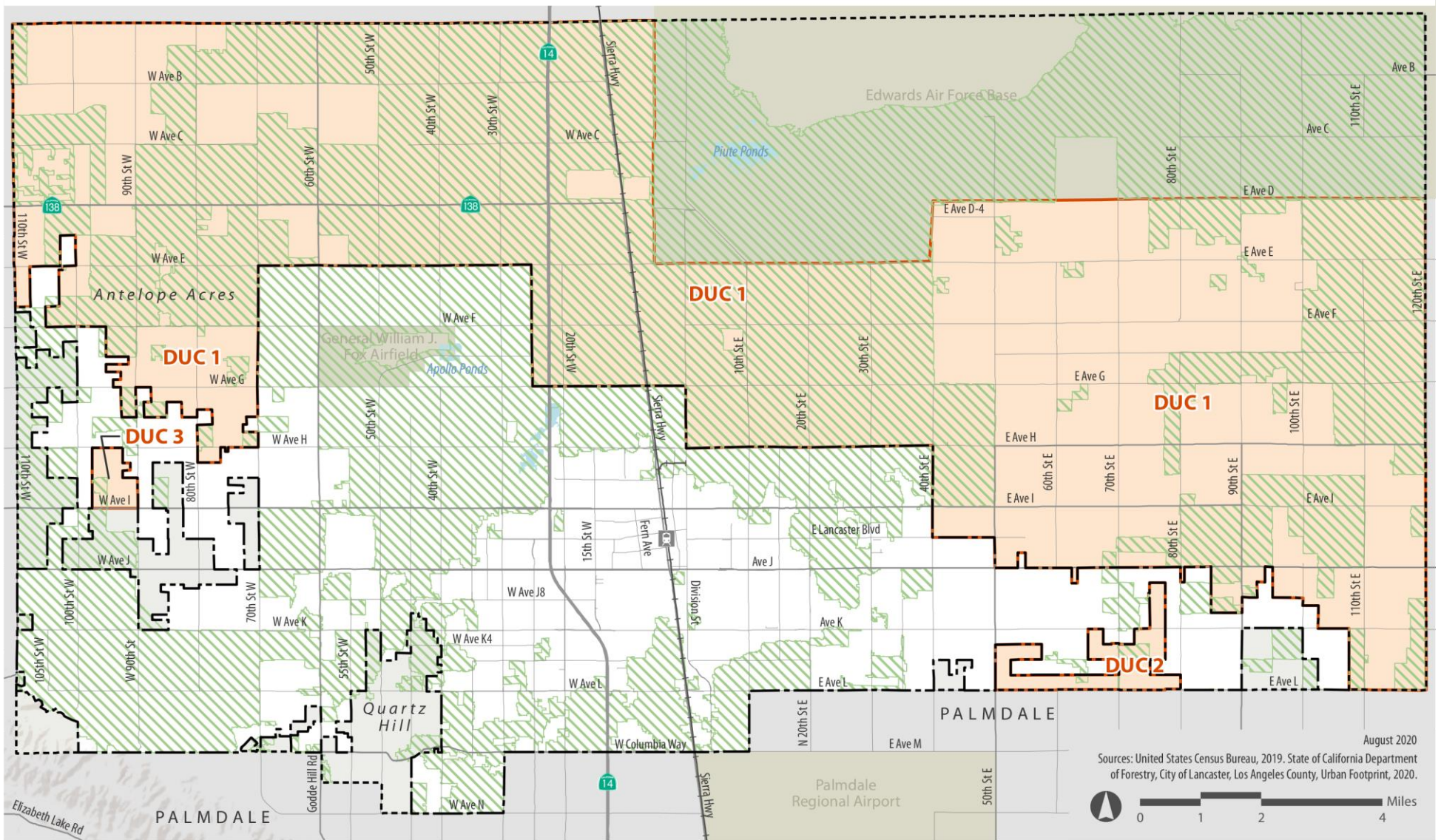
**Flood Risk Areas (DUCs only)**

1% Annual Chance (100-year flood)  
 River Or Stream Flood Hazard Areas

**Base Map Features**

City of Lancaster Boundary  
 Sphere of Influence  
 Railways and Metrolink Station  
 Airports and Military Installations

**Figure A-4: Fire Hazard Severity Zones**



August 2020  
 Sources: United States Census Bureau, 2019. State of California Department of Forestry, City of Lancaster, Los Angeles County, Urban Footprint, 2020.



**Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities (DUC)**

DUC Communities

**Fire Hazard Severity Zones**

Moderate

**Base Map Features**

- City of Lancaster Boundary
- Sphere of Influence
- Railways and Metrolink Station
- Airports and Military Installations

## Wastewater

Properties within the DUCs rely upon individual septic systems to handle wastewater; no deficiencies have been identified. Soils capable of supporting septic systems will allow for the wastewater service demands of future development to be met. Future development without capable soils will require annexation by LACSD District 14 before sewer wastewater service can be provided.<sup>9</sup>

LACSD District 14 can charge a connection fee for the privilege of connecting to their system or increasing capacity in an amount sufficient to accommodate a proposed project. The connection fee is a capital facilities fee used to provide additional conveyance, treatment, and disposal facilities (capital facilities) required by new users connecting to the LACSD sewerage system or by existing users that significantly increase the quantity or strength of their wastewater discharge. The connection fee ensures that all users pay their fair share for any necessary expansion of the system.<sup>10</sup>

The treatment plant was converted to full tertiary treatment in 2012 which expanded its capacity. The plant will be upgraded as population increases in the Antelope Valley region. Even with the proposed buildout of the Lancaster Health District, the plant would still have sufficient capacity to treat wastewater flows. The Lancaster Health District at buildout would equate to approximately 27.3 percent of the remaining capacity of the treatment plant.<sup>11</sup>

While the proportion of future development using septic systems versus sewer systems in the DUCs remains unknown, sewer wastewater services have adequate service capacity to meet new demands and will be expanded as necessary.

## Stormwater and Drainage

No stormwater and drainage deficiencies are reported in the DUCs; however, large portions of DUC 1 and parts of DUC 2 fall within flood zones. While most of these areas remain undeveloped, future development would need to address the flood hazards. Future development within the 100-year flood zone would require improvements to flood control facilities and issuance of Letters of Map Revision by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) showing changes to 100-year flood zones that reflect such improvements. Alternatively, future structures must be constructed with floor beams of the lowest floor above the 100-year flood base elevation. Flood insurance available through the National Flood Insurance Program would also be required.

Requirements for erosion control, water quality protection, and grading operations set forth in Los Angeles County Code regulations and required by the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) will facilitate stormwater management systems in future development. While impervious areas would be created from future growth within the DUCs, the increase in impervious areas would still be a small fraction of land. About 91 percent of the DUCs are designated by the Los Angeles County 2035 General Plan for either Open Space or Rural uses.<sup>12</sup>

## Fire Protection

Fire protection services for the DUCs are adequate as of 2021. Undeveloped land will continue to receive a suburban or rural level of fire protection as appropriate until these areas become more urbanized. Increased demand for fire protection services will follow as concentrated residential development occurs.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> LACounty\_gp\_2035\_deir  
10

<https://www.cityoflancaesterca.org/home/showdocument?id=17259>

<sup>11</sup> Lancaster Health District Master Plan EIR, December 2020.

<sup>12</sup> LACounty\_gp\_2035\_deir

<sup>13</sup> GP2030MasterEnvironmentalA

## Potential Funding Mechanisms

Potential funding and financing mechanisms may be pursued by Los Angeles County and the City to address existing and future service deficiencies in the DUCs, including annexation to the City and connection to the City's existing and planned infrastructure. However, no DUCs are being considered for annexation by the City of Lancaster as of 2021.

Principal funding sources for local government infrastructure usually include taxes, benefit assessments, bonds, and exactions (including impact fees). Federal and state programs also can potentially help address existing and future deficiencies identified in the DUCs discussed above. Some financing mechanisms may, however, be difficult to use because they require voter approval. For this reason, grants are often used for infrastructure improvements to reduce the cost burden for taxpayers, although grant programs can be very competitive and thus not a reliable source of funding.

A summary of potential funding mechanisms is provided below.

### California Financing Coordinating Committee (CFCC)

CFCC member agencies facilitate and expedite the completion of various types of infrastructure projects by helping applicants combine the resources of several agencies. Project information is shared between members so additional resources can be identified. CFCC member agencies conduct free funding fairs statewide each year to educate the public and potential applicants about the different member agencies and the financial and technical resources available.

### Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)

The CDBG program is an annual funding mechanism offered by the United States Housing and Urban Development Department. These versatile grants often fund the construction of projects such as water

and sewer facilities, recreation facilities, and street maintenance, as well as other public works projects.

### Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM)

This funding program is offered by the California Department of Water Resources. The IRWM Grant Programs offer funding for planning, disadvantaged community involvement, implementation, and companion grant programs that support sustainable groundwater planning and water-energy programs and projects.

### State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB)

SWRCB funds the Safe Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (SDWSRF), which provides low-interest loans and some grants to support water systems with technical, managerial, and financial development and infrastructure improvements. The awarded funds can only be used for capital costs and cannot be used for operation and maintenance of infrastructure. Furthermore, the funds can only be used for public water systems and not domestic wells or state small systems.

### USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) Rural Development Program

The USDA Rural Development Program provides several funding mechanisms for a variety of infrastructure projects, including:

- Circuit Rider Program Emergency Community Water Assistance Grants
- Household Water Well System Grants
- Individual Water & Wastewater Grants
- Solid Waste Management Grants
- Water & Waste Disposal Grants to Alleviate Health Risks on Tribal Lands and Colonies
- Water & Waste Disposal Loans & Grants
- Water & Waste Disposal Loan Guarantees
- Water & Waste Disposal Predevelopment Planning Grants
- Water & Waste Disposal Revolving Loan Funds

- Water & Waste Disposal Technical Assistance & Training Grants
- Drinking water disinfecting projects using UV technology and ozone treatment

## Key Terms

**Community:** An inhabited area within a city or county that contains no less than 10 dwelling units adjacent or in close proximity to one another.

**Disadvantaged Unincorporated Community (DUC):** A community in which the median household income is 80 percent or less than the statewide median household income.

**Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo):** A commission within each county that reviews and evaluates all proposals for formation of special districts, incorporation of cities, annexation to special districts or cities, consolidation of districts, and merger of districts with cities. Each county's LAFCo is empowered to approve, disapprove, or conditionally approve such proposals. This commission is made up of two members of the County Board of Supervisors, two City Council members, and a public member.

**Sphere of Influence (SOI):** The probable physical boundaries and service area of a local agency, as determined by the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo).<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> OPR\_SB-244-Technical-Advisory\_2.15.13

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**City of Lancaster**

HOUSING, ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE, AND SAFETY ELEMENTS

# **APPENDIX EJ-B: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT INPUT**



## Agenda

- Introductions
- Overview of existing health and environmental conditions
- Discussion on potential environmental justice strategies

# Environmental Justice Element Focus Group

Wednesday, February 24, 2021

1 - 2:30 PM

## Existing Environmental and Health Conditions

### Pollution

Westside dust/ocean air brings in dust that causes valley fever	Weather conditions (extreme heat, wind, etc.)	More indoor activity spaces
If possible to close landfill closure/move away from residential areas	Should the focus be more on big ticket items such as closure of landfills and implement more pocket parks	

### Food access

Westside has grocery stores closer to homes; eastside is more desert/agricultural landscape further away and folks have less access to cars	Food insecurity is a big issue that YMCA notices	How to encourage folks to cook/eat healthy foods?
all students eat free - food distributions with bus drop offs, and boxes with full meals	District is doing Zoom meal cooking call to accompany food distribution	

### Park acces and physical activity

Car needed to get to parks (far distance); more pocket parks	School districts have open space on campus and not heavily used during weekends	Weather constrains outdoor use
Westside has better access to parks than eastside	Not all folks are able to participate in programs. Need more strategies on how to encourage participation	Need wifi at parks
Unsheltered folks utilize parks as a refuge	Avenue I improvements are a success, we can do more	

### Health and social

Valley fever is not talked about as often	Spotty internet access on the eastside (digital divide)	History of unhealthy food choices
Unsheltered population: need for public showering and electricity, public restrooms available at night	Need for variety of affordable activities	Cost of activities, especially high school sports, dance, etc.
Need for meal prep to encourage healthy eating	Limited time to make healthy foods, long commute times	Need for collaboration between public and private for funding activities
Hard to get people to participate in the programming	Existing dumping at local churches and vacant lots: need support	



# Potential Environmental Justice Strategies

What types of programs would support the community best for...

## Climate Resiliency

Street trees homeowner responsibility, dry out during drought; owners need help taking care of trees/landscaping	Conservation district connecting with community - avoid invasive and allergy causing plants
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## Healthy Food Access

Incentivize healthy activities (gift cards, prizes that encourage exercise; scholarships for physical activities)	Kaiser Pilot Program (offered free activity classes; culturally relevant; health screening)	Partnerships with existing active living programs
Cooking classes to show people how to make healthy foods	Weather not as supportive for yearly community gardens	Awareness of more food assistance programs. Schools already distribute info, but what about those without children?
Healthy food campaign should start at schools	Creative solutions to encourage access to healthy foods, might be difficult to encourage large grocery store chains to set up shop	Campaign to encourage local corners to sell healthier items

## Community Services

Public showering programs; shared power usage (charging phones, etc), public restrooms	Clean up program for dumped items, is an issue at schools, churches etc.	WiFi open source access (WiStudent)
--	--	-------------------------------------

## Park Access & Active Living

Avenue I project is well liked	More pocket parks to increase park access (especially on eastside)	More sidewalks east of 30th Street; better division between streets and walking area)
Bonita is a nice park with exercise equipment	More dedicated walking paths/trails at parks (e.g. City Park)	Bikeways, equestrian trails, where appropriate
Could use more dog parks	Bike lockers at apartment buildings (Ventura/Port H example)	Safe routes to schools (sidewalks, paths, etc) and partnership between schools/City
Bike clinics and repair equipment in public areas/open spaces		

## Civic Engagement

Community notice boards; large laminated posters	All materials should be in Spanish	Text notification system (text a # to get more info on specific programs) city has system called Nixei but it could include more messageboard capabilities
Instagram account has been great to reach younger audience	Go to community members when possible or meet with groups with regularly scheduled meetings	

## TOP PRIORITIES





## Agenda

- Introductions
- Overview of existing health and environmental conditions
- Discussion on potential environmental justice strategies

# Environmental Justice Element - Community Workshop

Thursday, March 4, 2021

6 PM

## Existing Environmental and Health Conditions

### Top pollution issues?



### Top socioeconomic and health issues?



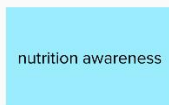
### Top food access issues?



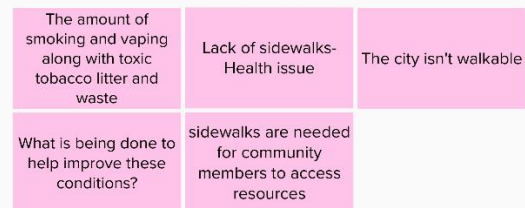
### Top park access issues?



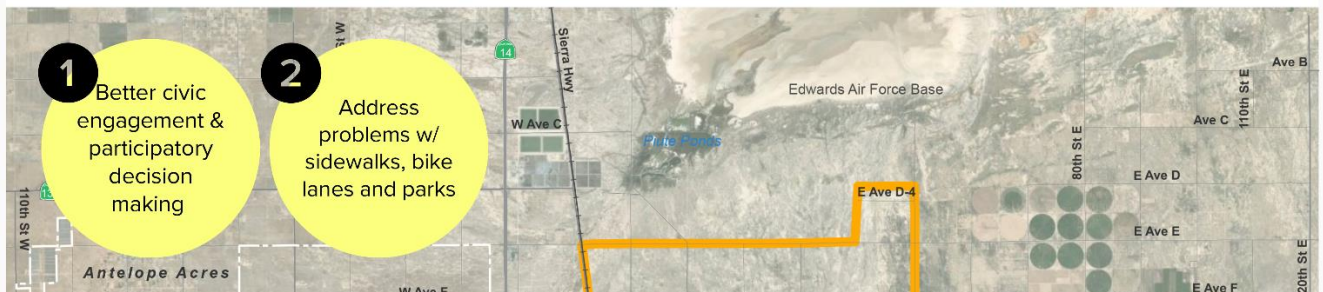
### Other food access issues?



### Other park access issues?



## TOP PRIORITIES



# Potential Environmental Justice Strategies

## Top climate resiliency strategies

- More street trees throughout the City
- Industry pollution reduction measures
- Water systems/ buffering between sensitive & industrial uses

### Other strategies?

- All parking lots should have one shade tree for every six parking spaces.
- Related to street trees, in general, having green areas with native plants
- Residential & community composting
- What about the issues with litter and [illegal] dump spots?

## Top park access and active living strategies

- Enhanced lighting and activities
- Ongoing maintenance
- Play amenities/ Exercise amenities/ Bike & pedestrian amenities

### Other strategies?

- Our parks need more trash cans to reduce litter
- The city in general does need more trashcans/ efforts to reduce dumping and litter

## Top healthy food access strategies?

- Access to affordable and healthy food
- Farmer's markets
- Community gardens/ Healthy food campaign/ Walk and bike access to health foods

### Other strategies?

- \*Support for cottage (home-based) food industry\*
- Transportation. Something like the DASH - limited bus line that LA has

## Top community services strategies?

- Youth employment programs
- After-school childcare facilities
- Enhance physical/ mental health services

### Other strategies?

Need all these community services (Youth employment, workforce development, housing assistance, after-school and childcare, senior services, enhance physical/mental health)

## Top civic engagement strategies

- Resident's decision-making power
- Partnerships with community organizations
- Increase access to city info

### Other strategies?

- Outreach (i.e door-to-door) of paper brochures re how to access city info & services
- Events that strengthen sense of community
- The fact there are so few of us here shows how important more outreach and access to updates is

## Additional Comments

Support for home cottage industries (food based industries that is home based) - Creates healthy jobs within the community they live in	The code seems to be against the cottage industry	City response: Lanaster does allow cottage industries - have to apply for permit with the City
Was this event advertised widely?	City response: Direct mailing to everyone in the EJ community, partnerships w/ CBO, City's social pages and the website	First step in the process - there is also a community survey that will be open for another few weeks
Most people I live around seem not to be aware of the city e-newsletter, and definitely don't think to look on the city website for info	What about reaching out to the local college? I think that would be a good opportunity to reach the constituent groups	
Can this be presented to local coalitions?	The Smoke-Free AV Lancaster coalition will be having a meeting this upcoming Monday, the 8th at 10am via zoom	Yes - please let us know if you can share any contact info, the City would be happy to present the information to coalitions
Smoke-Free AV would like to express the concern for the cigarette butts and other toxic pollutants in Lancaster parks	Trash pick up events - like on Earth Day. Also serves as a community building opportunity	



### Agenda

- What is a General Plan?
- Overview of existing health and environmental conditions
- Discussion on potential environmental justice strategies

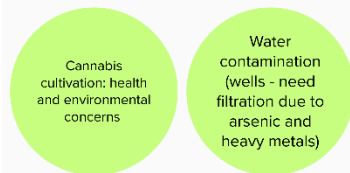
## Environmental Justice Element - Smoke Free AV Coalition Meeting

Monday, March 8, 2021

10 AM

### Environmental/Health Conditions and Policies to Consider

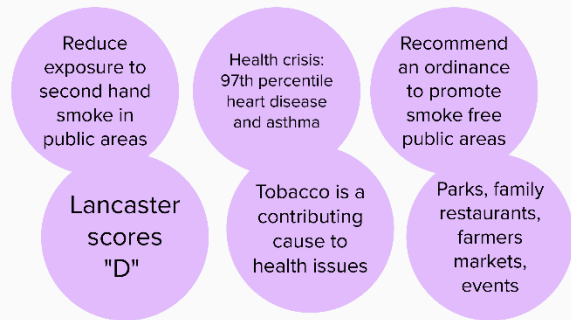
#### Pollution issue/policies



#### Food access issues/policies



#### Socioeconomic and health issues/policies



#### Park access issues/policies





**City of Lancaster**

HOUSING, ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE, AND SAFETY ELEMENTS

# **APPENDIX EJ-C: EXISTING CONDITIONS**

# Existing Conditions

## Table of Contents

### Contents

Introduction.....	EJ-C-7
Environmental Justice .....	EJ-C-7
Disadvantaged Communities.....	EJ-C-7
Pollution Burden.....	EJ-C-11
Population Characteristics.....	EJ-C-18
Health and Wellness.....	EJ-C-22
Healthy Places Index.....	EJ-C-22
General Health Conditions .....	EJ-C-25
Health Insurance and Healthcare Access .....	EJ-C-25
Food Access .....	EJ-C-28
Food Insecurity .....	EJ-C-28
Grocery Store Access.....	EJ-C-29
Physical Activity and Park Access .....	EJ-C-29
Physical Activity .....	EJ-C-29
Park Access .....	EJ-C-32
City Health and Equity Initiatives .....	EJ-C-35
Antelope Valley Healthy Community Commission.....	EJ-C-35
Lancaster Social Equity Commission .....	EJ-C-35
Healthy Homes Program .....	EJ-C-35
Lancaster Health District .....	EJ-C-35
Continuum of Care .....	EJ-C-35
Key Takeaways and Policy Implications.....	EJ-C-35

## List of Figures

Figure 1: Disadvantaged Communities.....	10
Figure 2: Pollution Burden.....	15
Figure 3: Proximity of Residential Uses to Industrial Uses and Freeways.....	16
Figure 4: Population Characteristics.....	21
Figure 5: Healthy Places Index.....	23
Figure 6: Hospital, Health Clinic, and Urgent Care Access .....	27
Figure 7: Healthy Food Access.....	30
Figure 8: Bicyclist and Pedestrian Involved Collisions .....	31
Figure 9: Park Access .....	34

## List of Tables

Table 1: CalEnviroScreen 3.0 Indicators .....	8
Table 2: CalEnviroScreen (CES) 3.0 Percentile Scores .....	9
Table 3: Pollution Burden Indicators Percentile Scores .....	11
Table 4: Housing and Population Proximity to Industrial Uses and Freeways .....	14
Table 5: Population Characteristics Indicators Scores .....	18
Table 6: Healthy Places Index Indicator Weights & Community Characteristics .....	22
Table 7: Healthy Places Index Indicators Percentile Scores (Citywide) .....	24
Table 8: Healthy Places Index Score .....	25
Table 9: Health Condition and Healthcare Service Comparisons.....	25
Table 10: Health Insurance Coverage.....	26
Table 11: Students Eligible for Free or Reduced Priced Meals.....	28
Table 12: Weight and Physical Activity.....	32

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# lancaster general plan

## environmental justice background memo

### INTRODUCTION

This Existing Conditions Memo analyzes environmental justice and community health and wellness conditions in the City of Lancaster and the City's Sphere of Influence (SOI) as a snapshot in 2020. Environmental justice concentrates on identifying disadvantaged communities within the City and SOI (together referred to as the Planning Area) and the pollution and other environmental and social burdens that impact those communities. This memo also addresses health and wellness conditions, including health insurance coverage and healthcare access, food insecurity and grocery store access, and physical activity. This report provides a foundation for preliminary policy and implementation recommendations for the General Plan's new Environmental Justice Element.

### Environmental Justice

Environmental justice is defined as the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental regulations and policies implemented by local agencies. Fair treatment means that no group of people should bear a disproportionate share of the negative environmental consequences resulting from industrial, governmental, and commercial operations and policies.

Equity is grounded in principles of justice and fairness, focused on creating a society in which everyone can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential. Equitable outcomes come about when smart, intentional strategies are put in place to ensure that everyone can participate in and benefit from decisions that shape their neighborhoods and regions.

### Disadvantaged Communities

Disadvantaged communities refer to areas that are most afflicted with a combination of economic, health, and environmental burdens.

California law requires local governments to identify any disadvantaged communities that exist within their jurisdiction. The California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool "CalEnviroScreen 3.0" was developed by the California Environmental Protection Agency to identify disadvantaged communities using the following indicators of pollution burden and population characteristics:

- **Pollution Burden.** Areas disproportionately affected by environmental pollution and other hazards that can lead to negative public health effects, exposure, or environmental degradation

- **Population Characteristics.** Areas with concentrations of people that are of low income, high unemployment, low levels of homeownership, high rent burden, sensitive populations, and/or low levels of educational attainment

Table 1 (CalEnviroScreen 3.0 Indicators) summarizes the indicators used in the CalEnviroScreen 3.0 analysis.

**Table 1: CalEnviroScreen 3.0 Indicators**

Pollution Burdens	
<b>Exposure Indicators:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ozone concentrations in air</li> <li>▪ PM 2.5 concentrations in air</li> <li>▪ Diesel particulate matter emissions</li> <li>▪ Drinking water contaminants</li> <li>▪ Use of certain high-hazard, high volatility pesticides</li> <li>▪ Toxic releases from facilities</li> <li>▪ Traffic density</li> </ul>	<b>Environmental Effect Indicators:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Toxic cleanup sites</li> <li>▪ Groundwater threats from leaking underground storage sites and cleanups</li> <li>▪ Hazardous waste facilities and generators</li> <li>▪ Impaired water bodies</li> <li>▪ Solid waste sites and facilities</li> </ul>
Population Characteristics	
<b>Sensitive Population Indicators:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Asthma emergency department visits</li> <li>▪ Cardiovascular disease (emergency department visits for heart attacks)</li> <li>▪ Low birth weight infants</li> </ul>	<b>Socioeconomic Factor Indicators:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Educational attainment</li> <li>▪ Housing burdened low-income households</li> <li>▪ Linguistic isolation</li> <li>▪ Poverty</li> <li>▪ Unemployment</li> </ul>

Source: California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool (CalEnviroScreen 3.0), Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA), 2017.

CalEnviroScreen 3.0 produces a percentile ranking of Lancaster’s census tracts (small, relatively permanent statistical subdivisions of a city or county). The percentile ranking for each census tract demonstrates the degree of burdens present in that tract relative to the rest of the State’s census tracts. Using the 20 indicators listed in Table 1, an overall CalEnviroScreen 3.0 score for is created for each census tract (see Table 2).

All census tracts across the State are then put in order from highest to lowest and assigned a percentile rank. Percentile ranking for a census tract above 75 would mean that the census tract is in the top 25 percent of all CalEnviroScreen 3.0 scores statewide. Table 2 (CalEnviroScreen 3.0 Percentile Scores) shows that one census tract in the Planning Area (9003, which includes areas within both the City and the Sphere of Influence) has an overall percentile score in the top 25 percent, qualifying that tract as a disadvantaged community. Although 4,514 people live in the disadvantaged community, most of the area is undeveloped. Residential dwellings are concentrated primarily in the southern third of the census tract. In addition, 20 other census tracts in Lancaster have a population characteristic percentile score in the top 25 percent; however, these tracts do not trigger the threshold for pollution burden characteristics. Although these census tracts are not considered disadvantaged communities, the high population characteristic percentile scores will be further analyzed in this memo and addressed in the Environmental Justice Element. Figure 1 (Disadvantaged Communities) illustrates the percentile ranking for all census tracts in Lancaster.

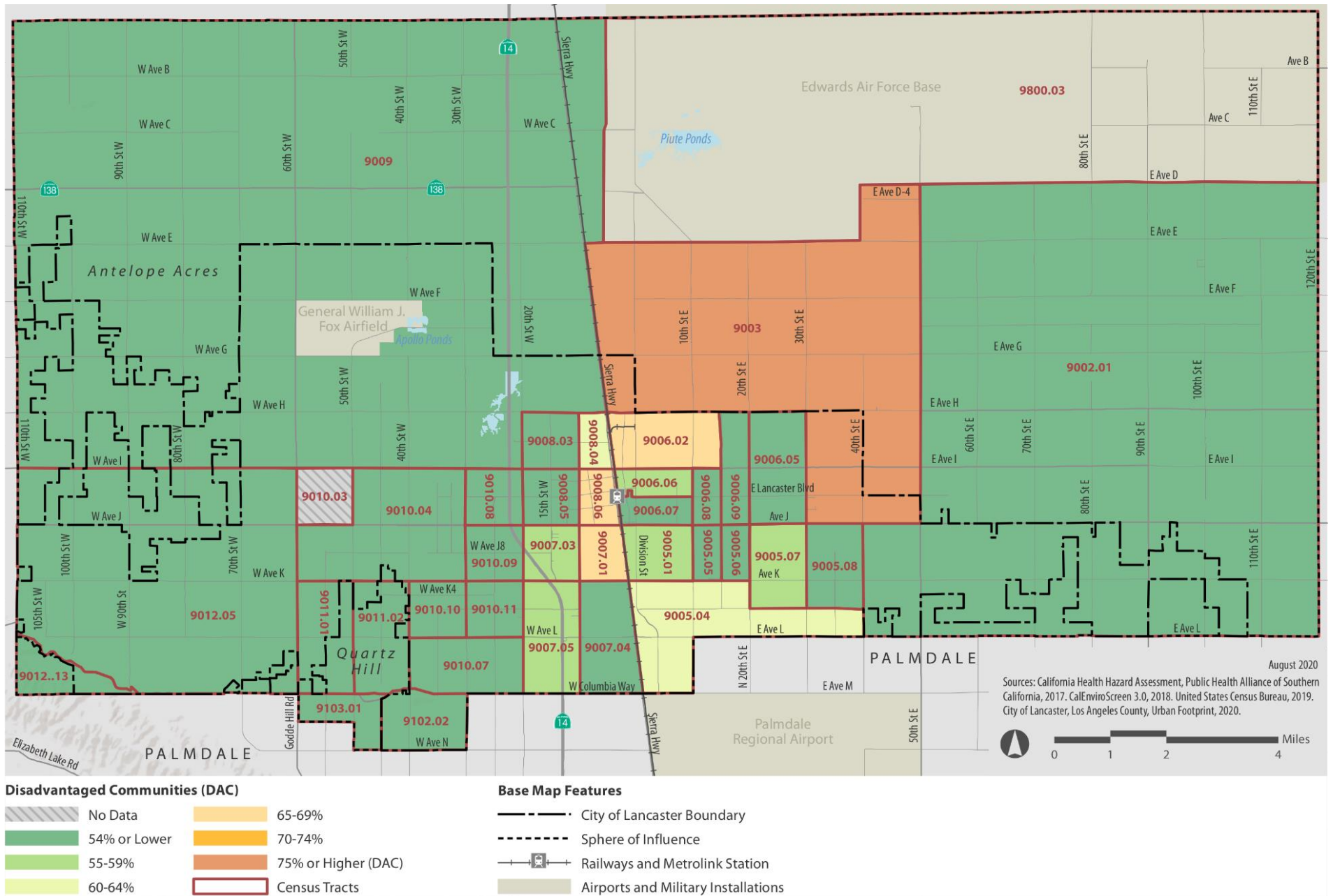
**Table 2: CalEnviroScreen (CES) 3.0 Percentile Scores**

Census Tracts	Percentiles and Indicators		
	CES 3.0 Percentile	Pollution Indicators Percentile	Population Characteristics Percentile
<b>Census Tracts in City of Lancaster</b>			
9005.01	55	12	95
9005.04	60	30	80
9005.05	44	5	93
9005.06	41	5	90
9005.07	57	15	93
9005.08	38	4	85
9006.02	66	18	99
9006.05	50	10	91
9006.06	56	10	98
9006.07	55	12	94
9006.08	41	5	90
9006.09	39	2	96
9007.01	69	27	96
9007.03	58	14	96
9007.04	48	15	78
9007.05	58	27	79
9008.03	43	6	90
9008.04	60	12	99
9008.05	52	11	91
9008.06	68	21	99
9010.03	0	6	0
9010.07	24	8	45
9010.08	28	6	59
9010.09	30	7	60
9010.10	34	6	69
9010.11	33	8	63
9102.02	40	37	41
<b>Census Tracts that Overlap City and Sphere of Influence</b>			
9002.01	45	19	65
<b>9003</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>85</b>
9009	43	35	47
9010.04	22	5	50
9011.01	30	6	64
9011.02	36	12	59
9012.05	19	5	42
9012.13	9	3	24
<b>Census Tracts in Sphere of Influence</b>			
9103.01	12	12	18
9800.03	0	4	0

Source: CalEnviroScreen 3.0 the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment, June 2018.

Note: Census tracts with a percentile of 75 or greater are highlighted in red, indicating these areas are within the top 25 percentiles in the State

**Figure 1: Disadvantaged Communities**



## Pollution Burden

The pollution burden for each census tract is calculated by measuring the average of exposure and environmental effects. The one disadvantaged community in the Planning Area (census tract 9003) scores in the top 25 percent for five of the pollution burden indicators, which is more than any other census tract, as shown in Table 3 (Pollution Burden Indicators Percentile Scores).

**Table 3: Pollution Burden Indicators Percentile Scores**

Census Tracts	Percentiles and Indicators												
	Pollution Indicators	Cleanup Sites	Hazardous Waste	Groundwater Threats	Solid Waste Facilities	Toxic Release Inventory	PM2.5	Traffic	Diesel PM	Drinking Water	Ozone	Impaired Water Bodies	Pesticides
City of Lancaster													
9005.01	12	0	18	32	33	9	8	50	23	37	91	0	0
9005.04	30	0	54	0	9	9	8	48	17	63	91	0	79
9005.05	5	0	43	0	0	9	8	32	23	37	91	0	0
9005.06	5	0	43	0	0	9	8	26	22	37	91	0	0
9005.07	15	0	16	0	0	9	8	18	13	53	91	0	90
9005.08	4	0	0	0	0	9	8	6	13	49	91	0	46
9006.02	18	0	9	41	88	9	8	23	19	61	91	0	0
9006.05	10	29	89	0	0	10	8	6	8	61	91	0	0
9006.06	10	0	9	55	39	9	8	28	19	37	91	0	0
9006.07	12	0	9	66	23	9	8	46	21	37	91	0	0
9006.08	5	0	0	0	0	9	8	24	20	74	91	0	0
9006.09	2	0	0	0	0	10	8	6	20	64	91	0	0
9007.01	27	0	49	29	50	8	8	60	27	62	91	0	0
9007.03	14	0	61	27	0	8	8	53	30	37	91	0	0
9007.04	15	0	84	0	9	8	8	61	21	37	91	0	0
9007.05	27	0	79	22	0	8	8	65	23	83	91	0	0
9008.03	6	0	9	0	37	9	8	17	18	61	91	0	0
9008.04	12	0	16	29	81	9	8	25	18	37	91	0	0
9008.05	11	0	43	6	0	8	8	45	23	63	91	0	0
9008.06	21	0	43	65	39	8	8	50	22	37	91	0	0
9010.03	6	39	43	0	0	9	8	7	6	59	91	0	0
9010.07	8	18	0	0	0	9	8	33	15	85	91	0	0
9010.08	6	0	26	0	0	8	8	25	25	61	91	0	0
9010.09	7	0	43	0	0	8	8	42	30	37	91	0	0

Census Tracts	Percentiles and Indicators												
	Pollution Indicators	Cleanup Sites	Hazardous Waste	Groundwater Threats	Solid Waste Facilities	Toxic Release Inventory	PM2.5	Traffic	Diesel PM	Drinking Water	Ozone	Impaired Water Bodies	Pesticides
9010.10	6	0	0	0	0	10	8	48	17	65	91	0	0
9010.11	8	0	0	0	0	9	8	50	30	63	91	0	0
9102.02	37	18	77	0	9	9	8	53	16	97	91	0	41
<b>Split between City and Sphere of Influence</b>													
9002.01	19	69	0	0	0	9	5	1	3	59	91	0	94
9003	53	84	96	22	95	10	8	1	10	80	91	0	42
9009	35	79	0	2	83	11	8	5	4	99	91	0	45
9010.04	5	0	16	0	0	9	8	16	13	81	91	0	0
9011.01	6	0	0	0	50	9	8	19	11	61	91	0	0
9011.02	12	18	0	0	50	9	8	26	13	79	91	0	6
9012.05	5	27	43	0	0	10	8	2	6	62	91	0	1
9012.13	3	0	0	0	33	10	9	5	3	61	91	0	0
<b>Sphere of Influence</b>													
9103.01	12	5	0	0	33	9	8	20	9	60	91	0	55
9800.03	4	69	0	22	0	11	5	1	1	48	91	0	0

Source: CalEnviroScreen 3.0 the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment, June 2018.

Note: Census tracts with a pollution burden percentile of 75 or greater are highlighted in red, indicating these areas are within the top 25 percentiles in the State

Every census tract in the Planning Area scores in the 91st percentile for ozone, which means the summed concentration of ozone in these tracts is higher than 91 percent of census tracts in California. The Planning Area is located within the Antelope Valley Air Quality Management District (AVAQMD). AVAQMD cites the proximity to the South Coast Air Basin (SCAB), which includes the highly polluted Los Angeles region and the San Bernardino Valley, and prevailing winds, which transport pollutants from more congested urban areas to the High Desert, as the primary contributors to high ozone levels. Significant and long-term exposure to relatively high amounts of ozone causes respiratory issues and chronic respiratory diseases.

Other pollution indicators scoring in the top 25 percent of the State's census tracts are noted and described below:

- **Cleanup Sites.** Cleanup sites are places contaminated with hazardous chemicals that require clean up by the property owners or government. Chemicals at cleanup sites can move through the air or groundwater. People living near these sites have a greater potential to be exposed to chemicals from the sites than people living farther away. Both census tracts scoring above the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile for the cleanup site indicator (census tracts 9003 and 9009) contain a cleanup site.
- **Hazardous Waste.** Hazardous waste is potentially dangerous or harmful to human health and the environment. Potential health effects associated with living in proximity to hazardous waste processing and disposal sites include diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Only certain licensed facilities are allowed to treat, store, or dispose of this type of waste. Hazardous waste can range from used automotive oil to highly toxic waste materials produced by factories and businesses. Census tracts 9007.04 and 9007.05 score above the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile for this indicator; each contain a business or other facility generating hazardous waste.

Hazardous waste may also be transported from businesses that generate waste to permitted facilities for recycling, treatment, storage, or disposal. Census tract 9003 contains a permitted hazardous waste storage facility, and nearby census tract 9006.05 is less than one-half mile from this facility.

- **Solid Waste Sites and Facilities.** Solid waste facilities are places where household garbage and similar kinds of waste are collected, processed, or stored. These include landfills and composting or recycling facilities. Solid waste disposal can release waste gases such as methane and carbon dioxide and may do so for decades after site closure. Exposure to landfill leachate can have adverse impacts on reproductive and respiratory systems. Waste Management operates a landfill known as the Lancaster Landfill & Recycling Center within the disadvantaged community (census tract 9003). The three other census tracts (9006.02, 9008.04, and 9009) scoring above the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile for this indicator each contain a recycling facility.
- **Drinking Water.** Drinking water sometimes becomes contaminated with chemicals or bacteria above the State's health standards. Both natural and human sources can contaminate drinking water. Natural sources include rocks, soil, wildlife, and fires. Human sources include factories, sewage, and runoff from farms. The six census tracts facing drinking water contamination score near or above the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile for arsenic levels. Arsenic can cause cancer despite occurring naturally in some rocks, soil, and groundwater sources throughout California. Census tracts with agriculture uses also see higher rates of nitrate. The fertilizer or manure leaches nitrate into groundwater and contaminates wells. Nitrate can cause a blood disorder in infants called blue baby syndrome.

- **Pesticides.** Pesticides are chemicals used to control insects, weeds, and plant diseases. They are applied to fields by air, farm machinery, or workers on the ground. Residents living on farms or near the agriculture uses in the three sparsely populated census tracts scoring higher than the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile for this indicator are exposed to pesticides, both outdoors and inside their homes. Exposure to high levels of some pesticides can cause illness right away or conditions such as birth defects or cancer later in life.

Figure 2 (Pollution Burden) shows the pollution burden percentile scores for the entire Planning Area. Although the aforementioned census tracts score above 75 percent for several indicators, the overall pollution burden scores do not exceed 55 percent in any census tract.

In addition to the pollution burden indicators, proximity to industrial uses and freeways exposes people to air pollutants and noise pollution. Industrial uses may generate unhealthy fumes and increase truck traffic near neighborhoods. Major roads and highways can bring air pollutants and noise into nearby neighborhoods as well.

Table 4 (Housing and Population Proximity to Industrial Uses and Freeways) summarizes the number of housing units and population living near industrial uses and Aerospace Highway (CA-14). Figure 3 (Proximity of Residential Uses to Industrial Uses and Freeways) illustrates the proximity of residential uses to these additional environmental pollution burdens in map format.

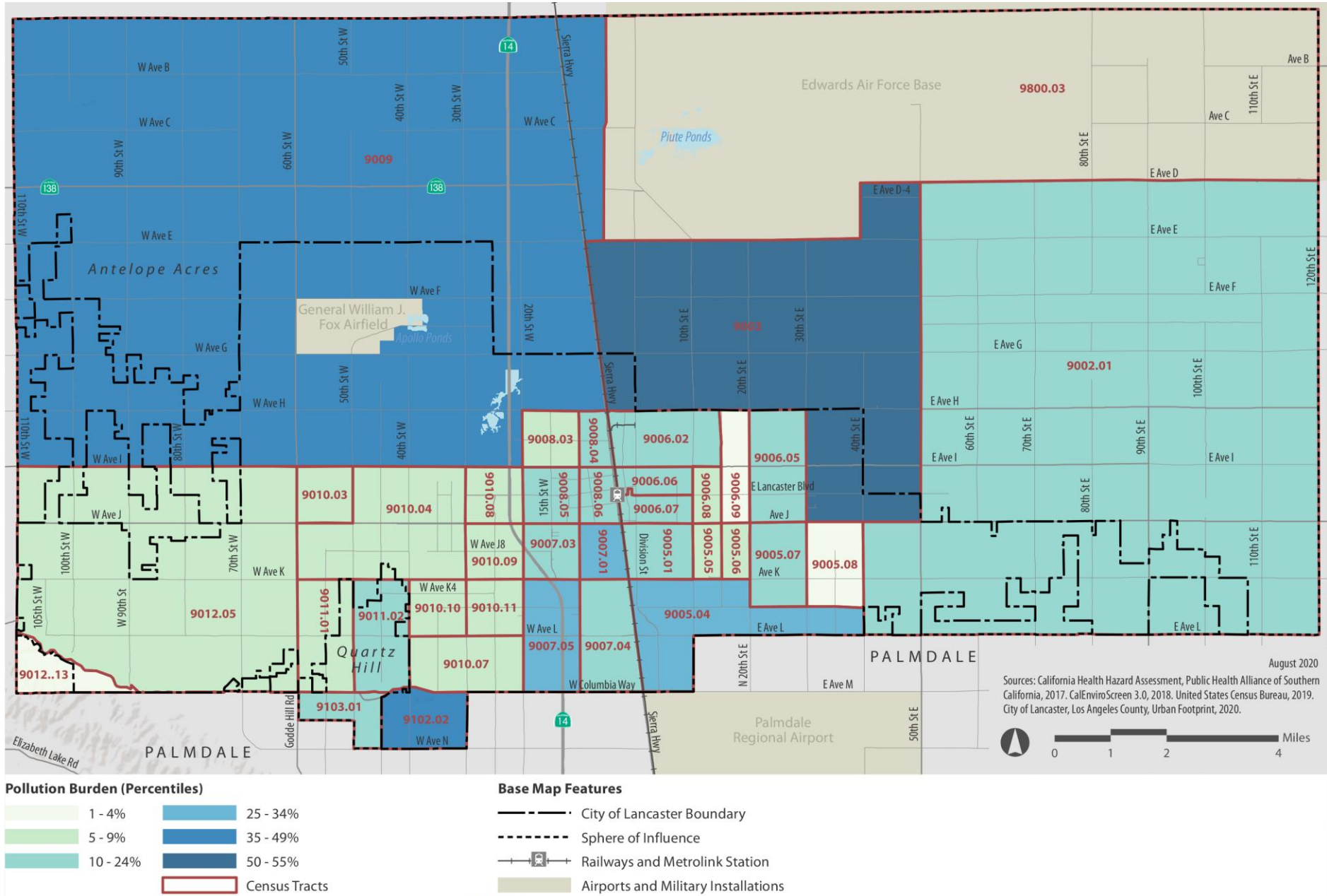
**Table 4: Housing and Population Proximity to Industrial Uses and Freeways**

	Number of Housing Units			Population		
	City	SOI	Total	City	SOI	Total
<b>Proximity to Industrial Uses</b>						
Share a Property Line	732	44	776	2,365	163	2,528
Within 500 Feet	3,612	517	4,129	11,667	1,487	13,154
<b>Proximity to CA-14 (Traffic and Diesel PM)</b>						
Within 500 Feet	678	224	902	2,190	581	2,771
Within 1,000 feet	2,546	225	2,771	8,224	584	8,808

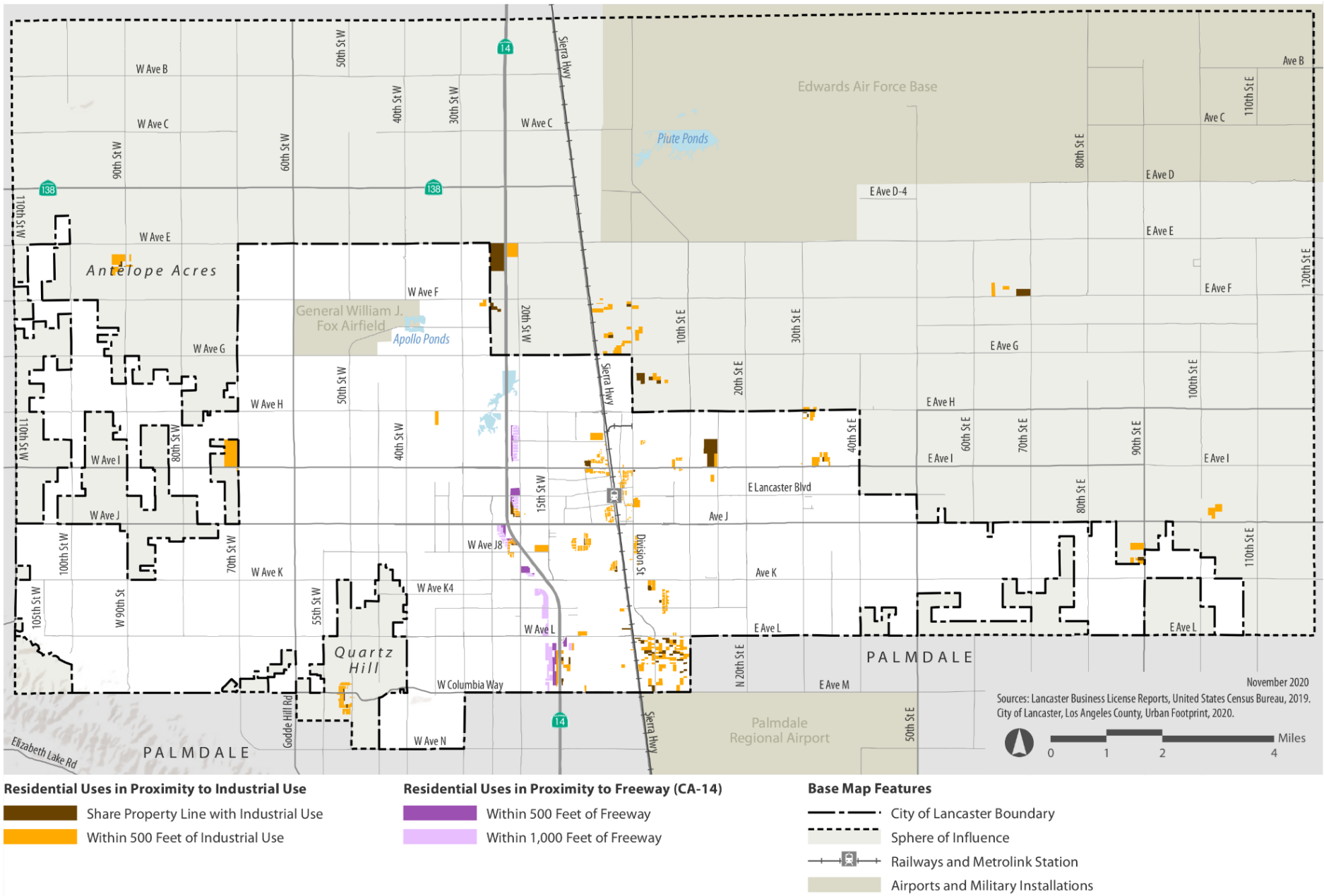
Source: City of Lancaster, Los Angeles County, MIG, Urban Footprint, 2020.



**Figure 2: Pollution Burden**



**Figure 3: Proximity of Residential Uses to Industrial Uses and Freeways**





*In Lancaster, nearly 3,500 homes (with over 11,500 residents) live within 500 feet of an industrial business.*



*In the City, over 2,500 homes with about 8,000 residents live within 1,000 feet of a freeway.*

## Population Characteristics

Table 5 shows CalEnviroScreen 3.0 population characteristics indicators related to health conditions (asthma, low-birth weight, and cardiovascular disease) and socioeconomic factors. Socioeconomic factors are related to commonly found characteristics of low-income populations such as lower educational attainment, linguistic isolation, and lower material well-being measured in poverty, unemployment, and housing burden.

Unlike the pollution burden indicators, the one disadvantaged community (census tract 9003) scores less than the median percentile for City census tracts, as shown in Table 5. Twenty of the 27 census tracts in the City score above the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile for the population characteristics indicator. Most of the census tracts in the Planning Area show very high rates of asthma, low birth weight, and cardiovascular disease. Many of the pollution issues captured in the pollution burden indicator analysis contribute to the respiratory and other health issues local residents face.

**Table 5: Population Characteristics Indicators Scores**

Census Tracts	Percentiles and Indicators								
	Population Characteristics	Asthma	Low Birth Weight	Cardiovascular Disease	Education	Linguistic Isolation	Poverty	Unemployment	Housing Burden
<b>City of Lancaster</b>									
9005.01	95	97	95	98	72	53	85	76	59
9005.04	80	94	96	93	47	18	46	69	47
9005.05	93	98	99	99	62	37	90	58	66
9005.06	90	98	97	99	57	17	82	63	66
9005.07	93	98	96	99	65	53	83	68	49
9005.08	85	98	99	99	59	21	69	44	47
9006.02	99	97	99	99	79	72	93	91	64
9006.05	91	98	84	99	73	62	87	69	21
9006.06	98	97	97	98	71	43	88	92	94
9006.07	94	96	97	97	65	41	97	49	76
9006.08	90	98	96	99	58	42	71	77	35
9006.09	96	98	88	99	69	56	85	73	80
9007.01	96	99	89	99	68	35	79	84	90
9007.03	96	99	92	99	61	52	83	63	92
9007.04	78	99	84	98	49	33	89	10	38
9007.05	79	98	92	96	26	8	65	49	71
9008.03	90	99	96	99	62	38	66	72	43
9008.04	99	99	96	99	79	57	92	97	89
9008.05	91	98	96	97	62	29	59	85	66
9008.06	99	99	92	99	71	49	96	98	98
9010.03	0	59	0	79	88	0	0	0	0
9010.07	45	55	32	72	46	11	26	49	71
9010.08	59	59	90	61	47	32	37	75	17
9010.09	60	59	91	79	41	46	54	25	19
9010.10	69	59	76	79	55	12	77	63	64
9010.11	63	59	87	79	33	31	44	64	36
9102.02	41	39	64	63	36	19	38	22	47

Census Tracts	Percentiles and Indicators								
	Population Characteristics	Asthma	Low Birth Weight	Cardiovascular Disease	Education	Linguistic Isolation	Poverty	Unemployment	Housing Burden
<b>City of Lancaster</b>									
9002.01	65	96	6	97	66	60	77	62	5
9003	85	97	81	97	59	0	71	63	29
9009	47	59	44	64	42	7	32	78	40
9010.04	50	59	67	79	29	20	24	60	26
9011.01	64	59	51	79	59	27	60	59	71
9011.02	59	59	69	79	47	29	51	61	29
9012.05	42	51	72	68	34	20	34	16	27
9012.13	24	22	71	41	28	0	12	32	34
<b>Sphere of Influence</b>									
9103.01	18	41	11	56	37	6	26	17	19
9800.03	0	48	0	47	0	0	0	0	0

Source: CalEnviroScreen 3.0 the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment, June 2018.

Note: Census tracts with a population characteristics percentile of 75 or greater are highlighted in red, indicating these areas are within the top 25 percentile in the State regarding population characteristics.

Population characteristics indicators scoring in the top 25 percent of the State’s census tracts are noted and further described below:

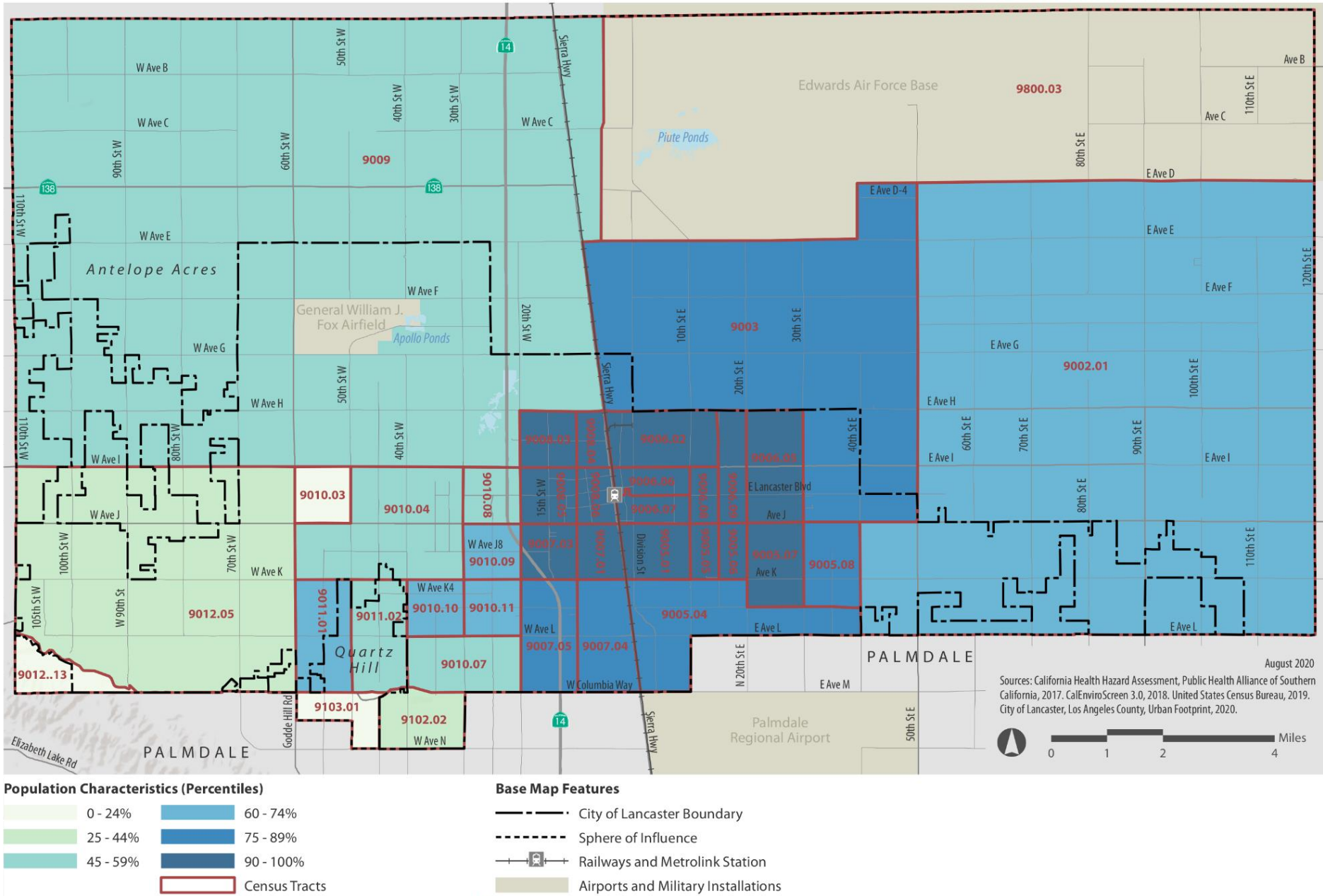
- **Asthma.** Asthma is a disease that affects the lungs and makes it hard to breathe. Symptoms include breathlessness, wheezing, coughing, and chest tightness. The causes of asthma are unknown, but both genetic and environmental factors can be involved. Outdoor air pollution can trigger asthma attacks. People living in 19 of the 27 census tracts in the City see more emergency department visits for asthma per 10,000 people than 95 percent of the other census tracts in the State, with some tracts showing more than 99 percent.
- **Low Birth Weight.** Babies who weigh less than about five and one-half pounds at birth are considered to have a low birth weight. Poor nutrition, lack of prenatal care, stress, and smoking by the mother are known to increase the risk of having a low-birth-weight baby. Studies suggest that pollution could also be a factor. Over 85 percent of the City’s census tracts score above the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile for low birth rate.
- **Cardiovascular Disease.** Cardiovascular disease can lead to acute myocardial infarction (heart attack) and other heart problems and is the leading cause of death both in California and the United States. Survivors of a cardiovascular event are highly vulnerable to future cardiovascular events, especially following short- or long-term exposure to particulate matter. Risk factors for developing cardiovascular disease include diet, lack of exercise, smoking, and exposure to air pollution. This indicator has the highest average score of all indicators in the Planning Area’s CalEnviroScreen 3.0 dataset, with 31 of 37 census tracts scoring above the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile.
- **Educational Attainment.** Educational attainment is the highest level of education a person has completed. People with more education usually earn higher incomes than people with less education. Studies have also found that communities with more educated people are less polluted and adults with less education have more pollution-related health problems. Although not as alarming as the other population characteristic indicators, three census tracts score above the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile, with many others close to this mark.
- **Poverty.** Members of low-income communities are more likely to be exposed to pollution and to suffer from poor health effects as a result of that exposure than residents of wealthier communities. Income can affect

health, as people with limited means often cannot afford healthy living and working conditions, nutritious food, and necessary medical care. Low-income communities are often located in areas with high levels of pollution. Poverty can cause stress that weakens the immune system and causes people to become ill from pollution. The U.S. Census Bureau determines the federal poverty level each year. The poverty level is based on the size of the household and the ages of family members. If a person or family's total income before taxes is less than the poverty level, the person or family is considered in poverty. The indicator used by CalEnviroScreen is the percent of the population with incomes less than two times the federal poverty level. A majority of the City's census tracts have higher rates of people living below twice the poverty level than 75 percent of the census tracts in California.

- **Unemployment.** The U.S. Census Bureau counts as unemployed people over 16 years old who are out of work and able to work but not working. This does not include students, active-duty military, retired people, and people who have stopped looking for work. Stress from long-term unemployment can lead to chronic illnesses, such as heart disease, and can shorten a person's life. Many residents in Lancaster face unemployment at higher rates than the rest of the State.
- **Housing Burden.** Households with lower incomes may spend a larger proportion of their income on housing and may suffer from housing-induced poverty, which can lead to adverse health effects. The housing burden indicator measures the percent of households in a census tract that are both low income (making less than 80 percent of the county median family income) and severely burdened by housing costs (paying greater than 50 percent of their income to housing costs). Low-income households paying more than 50 percent of their income on housing are on the rise.

Figure 4 shows the cumulative population characteristic percentile scores for the entire Planning Area. Again, despite these high scores, only in census tract 9003 do the overall disadvantaged scores exceed the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile.

**Figure 4: Population Characteristics**



## Health and Wellness

This Health and Wellness section presents data and analysis that identify the relationship between economic, education, healthcare, housing, transportation, and environmental decisions and their effects on health and wellness of disadvantaged communities and populations that historically have experienced inequities, institutionalized racism, exclusion, and/or isolation.

### Healthy Places Index

Everyone should have the opportunity to be healthy. One’s health is shaped dramatically by community characteristics—housing, education, economic, and other social factors—which often are shaped through policy. The California Healthy Places Index (HPI) combines eight indicators comprising 24 community characteristics with weighted scoring into a single indexed HPI Score, as seen in Table 6 (Healthy Places Index Indicator Weights and Community Characteristics). Within the datasets, scores are displayed in quartiles, allowing for straightforward comparisons within a specific geography and across the State. Ultimately, the Environmental Justice Element will explore opportunities to improve these conditions.

The results shown in Figure 5 and Table 7 can be used to explore, identify, and strategize existing healthy community conditions. In contrast to the CalEnviroScreen 3.0 data, where higher percentiles equate to worse conditions, **lower HPI percentiles equate to worse conditions** for both the overall HPI score and contributing indicators.

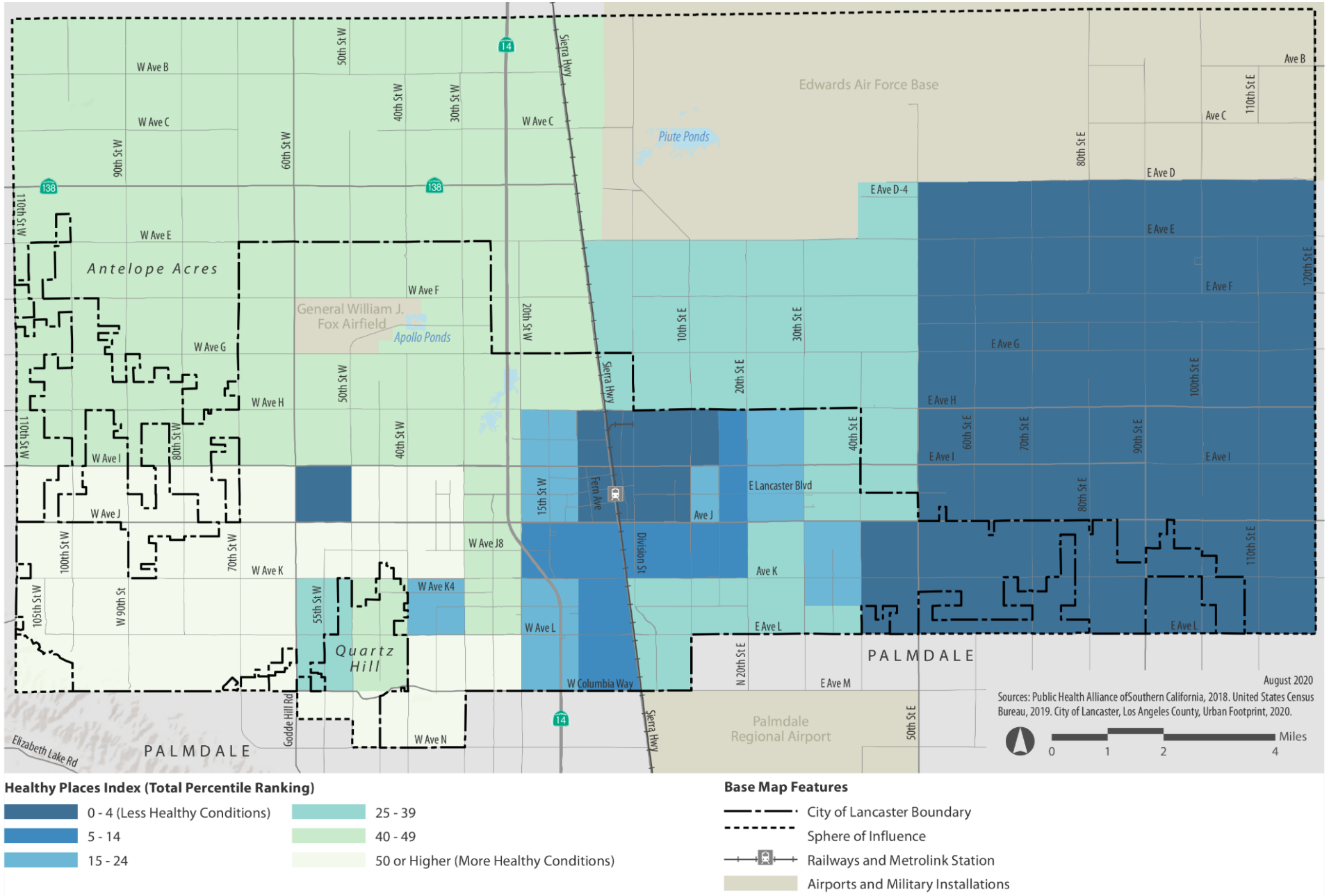
**Table 6: Healthy Places Index Indicator Weights & Community Characteristics**

<p><b>Economic (32% of HPI Score)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Above Poverty</li> <li>▪ Employed</li> <li>▪ Median Household Income</li> </ul>	<p><b>Education (19% of HPI Score)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Pre-School Enrollment</li> <li>▪ High School Enrollment</li> <li>▪ Bachelors Attainment</li> </ul>	<p><b>Transportation (16% of HPI Score)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Automobile Access</li> <li>▪ Active (healthy) Commuting</li> </ul>
<p><b>Social (10% of HPI Score)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Two Parent Household</li> <li>▪ Voting</li> </ul>	<p><b>Clean Environment (5% of HPI Score)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Clean Air - Diesel PM</li> <li>▪ Clean Air - Ozone</li> <li>▪ Clean Air - PM 2.5</li> <li>▪ Safe Drinking Water – Contaminants</li> </ul>	<p><b>Neighborhood (8% of HPI Score)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Retail Density</li> <li>▪ Supermarket Access</li> <li>▪ Parks</li> <li>▪ Tree Canopy</li> <li>▪ Alcohol Establishments Availability</li> </ul>
<p><b>Housing (5% of HPI Score)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Severe Housing Costs Burden</li> <li>▪ Homeownership</li> <li>▪ Housing Habitability</li> <li>▪ Uncrowded Housing</li> </ul>	<p><b>Healthcare (5% of HPI Score)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Insured Adults</li> </ul>	

Source: The California Healthy Places Index (HPI), Public Health Alliance of Southern California, 2020.



**Figure 5: Healthy Places Index**



**Table 7: Healthy Places Index Indicators Percentile Scores (Citywide)**

Healthy Places Index Indicators and Community Characteristics	Percentile
<b>Economic (32% of HPI Score)</b>	<b>22.6</b>
Above Poverty	26.1
Employed	16.0
Median Household Income	35.0
<b>Education (19% of HPI Score)</b>	<b>30.9</b>
Pre-School Enrollment	23.1
High School Enrollment	64.0
Bachelor’s Degree Attainment	26.9
<b>Transportation (16% of HPI Score)</b>	<b>9.5</b>
Active (Healthy) Commuting	20.5
Automobile Access	28.5
<b>Social (10% of HPI Score)</b>	<b>10.1</b>
Two-parent Household	8.4
Voting	20.0
<b>Neighborhood (8% of HPI Score)</b>	<b>17.4</b>
Retail Density	68.7
Supermarket Access	54.6
Park Access	22.6
Tree Canopy	13.0
Alcohol Establishments Availability	58.2
<b>Healthcare Access (5% of HPI Score)</b>	<b>52.8</b>
Insured Adults	52.8
<b>Housing (5% of HPI Score)</b>	<b>40.4</b>
Severe Housing Costs Burden	32.4
Homeownership	34.1
Housing Habitability	58.2
Uncrowded Housing	57.2
<b>Clean Environment (5% of HPI Score)</b>	<b>43.3</b>
Clean Air - Diesel PM	47.9
Clean Air - Ozone	9.9
Clean Air - PM <sub>2.5</sub>	80.7
Safe Drinking Water – Contaminants	48.8
<b>HPI Score for City of Lancaster</b>	<b>20.9</b>

Source: The California Healthy Places Index (HPI), Public Health Alliance of Southern California, 2020.

Note: Lower percentiles equate to worse conditions when compared to the rest of the State.

## Comparative Health Indicators

The City of Lancaster’s HPI Score of 20.9 means the City has healthier community conditions than just 20.9 percent of other California cities (meaning that 79.1 percent of other cities in California have healthier community conditions). Particularly, the Economic, Transportation, Social, and Neighborhood indicators and their contributing community characteristics score in the bottom 25 percent of California cities. The only indicator to score better than half of California cities is Healthcare Access. Compared to other High Desert communities, Lancaster scores in the middle of the pack. Lancaster fairs better than most communities in Kern County while falling below many communities in Los Angeles County. See Table 8 for a comparison of Lancaster to surrounding communities (with higher scores being more favorable).

**Table 8: Healthy Places Index Score**

City or County	Healthy Places Index Score
Leona Valley	77.9
Santa Clarita	72.5
Elizabeth Lake	62.0
Los Angeles County	50.0
Apple Valley	30.1
Palmdale	25.0
Lancaster	20.9
Rosamond	19.7
Sun Village	17.4
Victorville	15.3
Hesperia	13.3
Kern County	12.5
Mojave	2.8

Source: The California Healthy Places Index (HPI), Public Health Alliance of Southern California, 2020.

## General Health Conditions

Table 9 (Health Condition and Healthcare Service Comparisons) provides health estimates from UCLA Health Policy Center’s California Health Interview Survey (CHIS), the largest state health survey in the United States. Survey respondents in Lancaster show comparatively similar outcomes as other large High Desert cities like Palmdale and Victorville. When compared to Los Angeles and Kern Counties, Lancaster fairs slightly worse.

**Table 9: Health Condition and Healthcare Service Comparisons**

Health Conditions (2016) for Population Age 18 and Older in Past 12 months	Lancaster	Palmdale	Victorville	Los Angeles County	Kern County
Fair or poor health	25.7%	30.0%	27.1%	20.6%	23.9%
Needed help for mental health problems	16.8%	16.0%	16.1%	16.5%	13.7%
Delayed prescriptions/medical services	23.7%	23.7%	20.8%	19.7%	16.7%
Serious psychological distress	10.2%	10.0%	10.2%	8.6%	10.0%
Ever diagnosed with diabetes	10.8%	11.9%	11.7%	9.5%	12.0%

Source: AskCHIS Neighborhood Edition, California Health Interview Survey (CHIS), UCLA, 2016.

## Health Insurance and Healthcare Access

Access to comprehensive, quality health care services is important for promoting and maintaining health, preventing and managing disease, reducing unnecessary disability and premature death, and achieving health equity for all Americans. People without medical insurance are more likely to lack a usual source of medical care, such as a primary care provider, and are more likely to skip routine medical care due to costs, increasing their risk for serious and disabling health conditions. When they do access health services, they are often burdened with large medical bills and

out-of-pocket expenses. Increasing access to both routine medical care and medical insurance is vital toward improving health.

Kaiser Permanente’s 2019 Community Health Needs Assessment asked over 500 Antelope Valley residents about their greatest health concerns in the general community. Some key takeaways from the survey reveal that economic insecurity leaves many residents with little time or money to maintain their health. Additionally, a lack of appointment availability and public transportation prevents poorer residents from accessing adequate health care. Lastly, the survey found that generational stress and racial bias compounds existing medical conditions among minority community members and prevents their access to equitable health care.

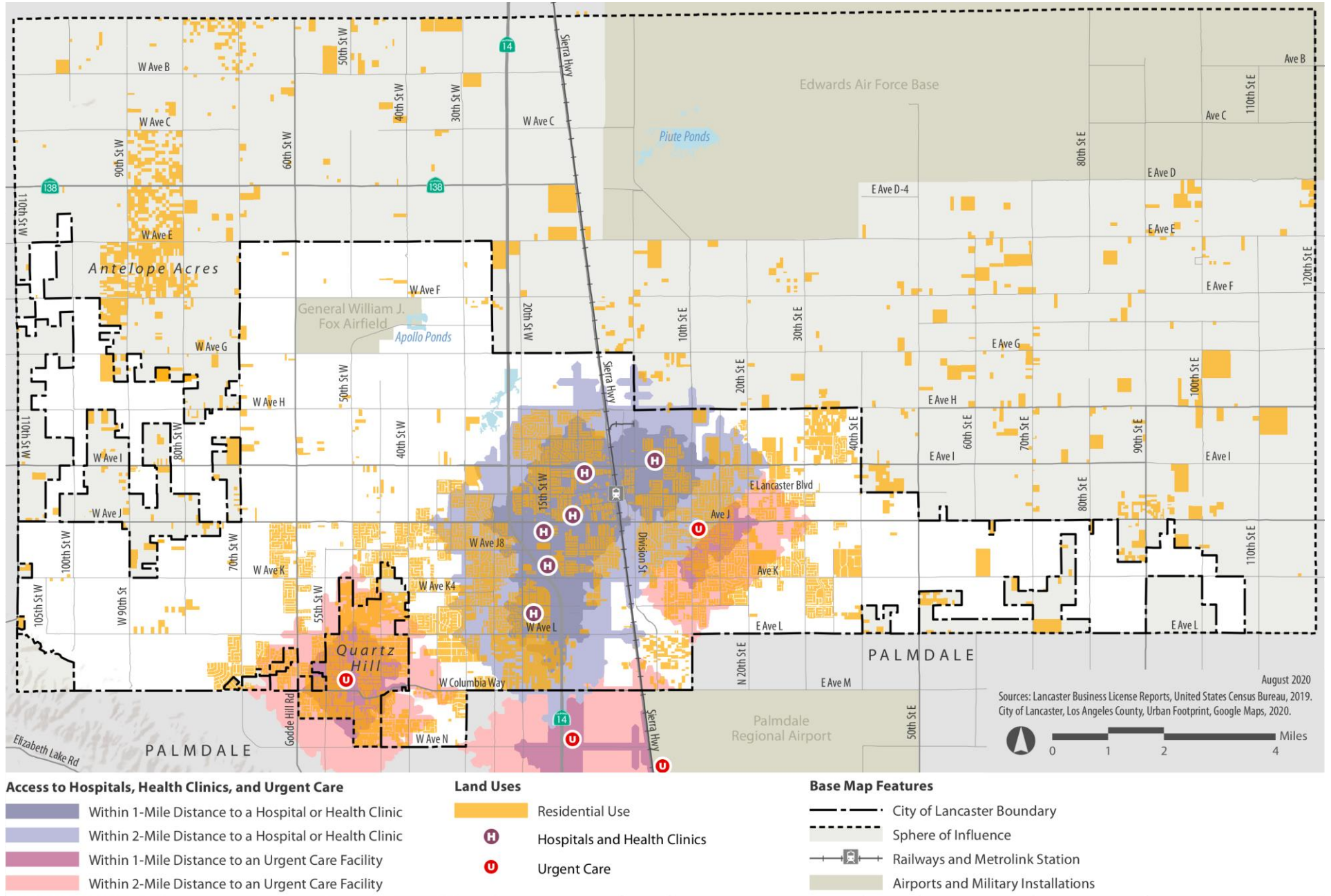
Table 10 shows the percentage of Lancaster’s population with health insurance coverage. Lancaster residents generally have good health insurance coverage compared to all Los Angeles County residents. Additionally, most Lancaster residents have good access to hospitals and urgent care facilities, as shown in Figure 6 (Hospital, Health Clinic, and Urgent Care Access). About 67 percent of Lancaster residents live within two miles of a hospital or health clinic, and over 85 percent of residents live within two miles of a hospital, health clinic, or urgent care facility. Although almost no residents in the SOI live within two miles of a hospital or health clinic, two-thirds of SOI residents live within two miles of an urgent care facility. The primary hospitals serving the Planning Area include Antelope Valley Hospital and High Desert Regional Health Center. A Kaiser Permanente Behavior Health facility is also available within the Planning Area and is within close proximity to the Antelope Valley Hospital. Additionally, the Antelope Valley Community Clinic-Palmdale is less than 10 miles away.

**Table 10: Health Insurance Coverage**

Health Insurance Status	Lancaster		LA County
	Number	Percent	Percent
<b>Total Population</b>	<b>153,427</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>With Health Insurance Coverage</b>	<b>145,268</b>	<b>94.7%</b>	<b>90.4%</b>
<b>No Health Insurance Coverage</b>	<b>8,159</b>	<b>5.3%</b>	<b>9.6%</b>
<b>Demographics - With Health Insurance Coverage</b>			
<b>Age</b>			
Under 19 years	46,293	96.7%	96.1%
19-64 years	84,062	92.9%	86.6%
65 years and older	14,943	98.8%	98.5%
<b>Race and Ethnicity</b>			
White Alone	91,196	95.2%	91.3%
Hispanic/Latino (of any race)	60,207	94.2%	85.9%
Black or African American Alone	30,045	94.5%	93.5%
Asian Alone	6,826	94.0%	93.7%
<b>Nativity and U.S. Citizenship Status</b>			
Native Born	130,316	95.0%	94.0%
Foreign Born – Naturalized Citizen	9,655	96.8%	94.0%
Foreign Born – Not a Citizen	5,297	85.0%	71.7%

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2019.

**Figure 6: Hospital, Health Clinic, and Urgent Care Access**



## Food Access

### Food Insecurity

The U.S. Department of Agriculture defines food insecurity as a lack of consistent access to enough food for an active, healthy life. A household being unable to afford sufficient, quality food correlates with experiences of unemployment and poverty. Participation in programs designed to address hunger, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP or food stamps), rises in response to food insecurity.

Approximately 10 percent of households in Lancaster received Food Stamps/SNAP (also known as CalFresh, California’s food stamp program) in 2018 compared to about nine percent in Los Angeles County (SNAP, 2018). SNAP can buffer participants against food insecurity and poor health.

Additionally, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is a federal income supplement program designed to help aged, blind, and disabled people who have little or no income and to meet basic needs for food, clothing, and shelter. Participation in disability assistance programs is relatively high among adults with disabilities, particularly those who are unable to work due to their disability. Food insecurity is more prevalent among SSI recipients, including higher rates of food insecurity due to more severe disabilities. About 5.8 percent of households in Lancaster receives SSI income compared to about 6.5 percent of Los Angeles County residents (U.S. Census, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2019).

Residents may also rely on food banks and social service providers throughout the City, including Antelope Valley Rescue Mission, Grace Resources, A Helping Hand, and several religious institutions. Families with school-aged children may receive free and reduced-price meals as part of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), a federally assisted meal program that provides free, nutritionally balanced lunches to children whose families meet eligibility income requirements. The NSLP provides nutritious foods that help reduce the harmful impact of food insecurity and improve outcomes for children. Research sponsored by U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Food and Nutrition Service found that children receiving free or reduced price NSLP lunches consume fewer empty calories and more fiber, milk, fruit, and vegetables than income eligible nonparticipants, both at lunch and during a full 24 hours. Free and reduced-price school meals also free up some household resources for other necessary purchases. Table 11 summarizes the portion of students eligible for free or reduced priced meals at school districts located within and in close proximity to the Planning Area. These school districts, except for Westside Union Elementary, have much higher rates than the average rates in the County and State, which have only 72 percent and 59 percent eligibility, respectively.

**Table 11: Students Eligible for Free or Reduced Priced Meals**

Local School Districts	Percentage of Students Eligible for Free/Reduced Priced Meals
Lancaster Elementary School District	88%
Eastside Union Elementary School District	95%
Westside Union Elementary School District	50%
Palmdale Elementary School District	91%

Source: California Department of Education, Free and Reduced Prices Meals, 2019.

## Grocery Store Access

Limited access to supermarkets, grocery stores, farmers' markets, and other sources of healthy and affordable food may make it harder for some residents to eat a healthy diet. Expanding the availability of nutritious and affordable food by developing and equipping grocery stores, small retailers, corner markets, and farmers' markets in communities with limited access is an important part of creating a healthy community. Food deserts are areas in which it is difficult to buy affordable or good-quality fresh food. To define food deserts in Lancaster, the following indicators of access are used, as defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture:

- Accessibility to sources of healthy food, as measured by distance to a store or by the number of stores in an area
- Individual-level resources that may affect accessibility, such as family income or vehicle availability
- Neighborhood-level indicators of resources, such as the average income of the neighborhood and the availability of public transportation

Figure 7 (Health Food Access) shows the locations where healthy food options (e.g., produce, fresh meats and seafood, dairy) can be purchased. The map also identifies several low-income and low-vehicle access census tracts that include:

- A poverty rate of 20 percent or higher, or with a median family income less than 80 percent of median family income for Los Angeles County
- More than 100 households with no access to a vehicle
- A significant number of residents located more than one-half mile from the nearest supermarket

## Physical Activity and Park Access

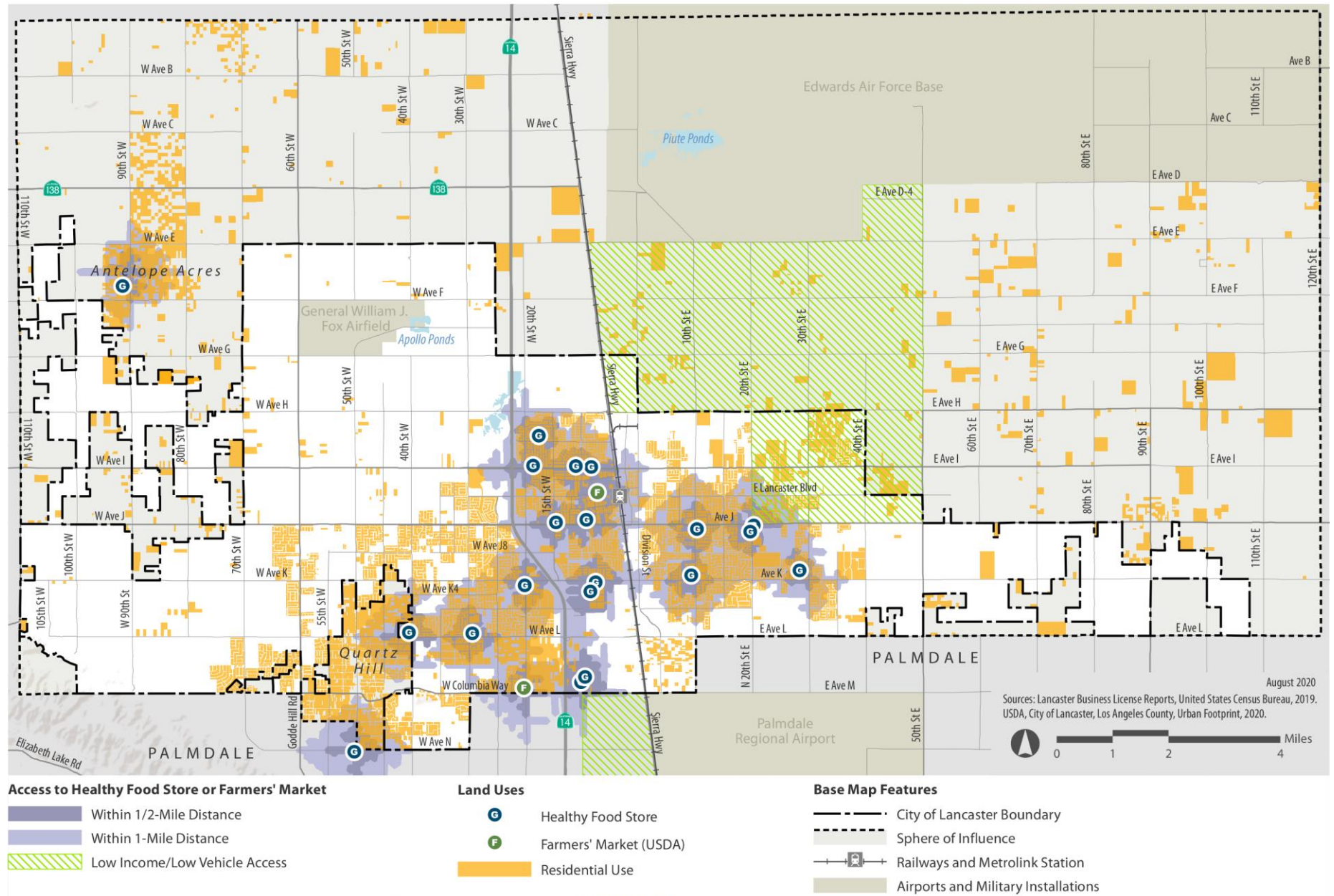
### Physical Activity

Research demonstrates that participating in regular moderate to vigorous physical activity provides many health benefits. Some benefits of physical activity can be achieved immediately, such as reduced feelings of anxiety, reduced blood pressure, improvements in sleep, some aspects of cognitive function, and insulin sensitivity. Other benefits—such as increased cardiorespiratory fitness, increased muscular strength, decreases in depressive symptoms, and sustained reduction in blood pressure—require a few weeks or months of participation in physical activity.

Physical activity can also slow or delay the progression of chronic diseases, such as hypertension and type 2 diabetes and public health professionals recommend at least 30-minutes of daily moderate to vigorous exercise. Benefits persist with continued physical activity. Table 12 shows the level of self-reported physical activity in the City and surrounding areas per the CHIS survey. Respondents in Lancaster generally fair worse than Los Angeles County and better than Kern County, with similarities to the other large High Desert cities.

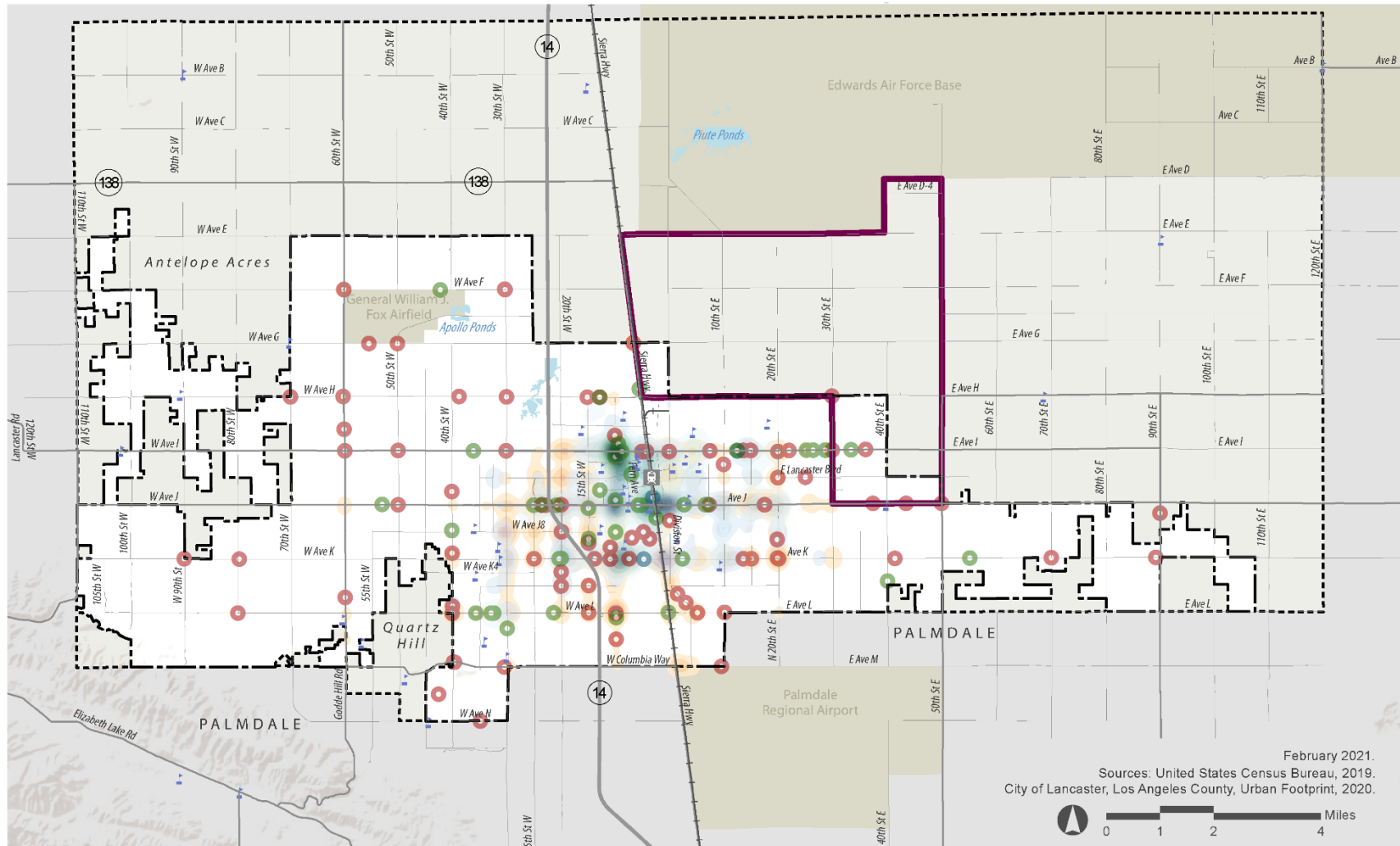
Research has found that walking and biking provide the same health benefits as engaging in daily exercise. Activity accumulated in short bursts, of a minimum of 10 minutes at a time, can achieve similar health benefits, such as reducing mortality by 12% and chronic diseases by 10%. Pedestrian and bicyclist infrastructure provides people with safe dedicated areas to walk and bike, which helps increase the use of active transportation and enhances public health. In Lancaster, vehicle collision data shows a concentration of pedestrian-related fatalities within the downtown area. In the Environmental Justice Community, pedestrian related fatalities have occurred mostly along E Avenue I. These areas are likely more prone to collisions as there are higher vehicle and pedestrian traffic volumes.

Figure 7: Healthy Food Access

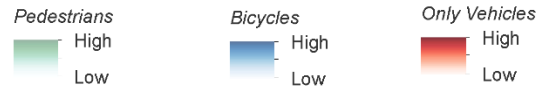




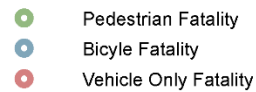
**Figure 8: Bicyclist and Pedestrian Involved Collisions**



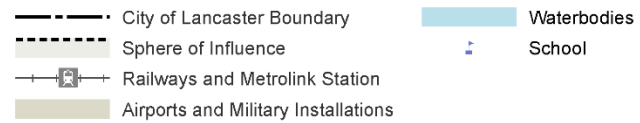
**Collisions Involving Pedestrians Bicycles or Only Vehicles**



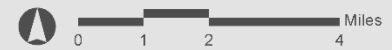
**Fatalities**



**Base Map Features**



February 2021.  
Sources: United States Census Bureau, 2019.  
City of Lancaster, Los Angeles County, Urban Footprint, 2020.



**Table 12: Weight and Physical Activity**

Weight and Physical Activity (2016)	Lancaster	Palmdale	Victorville	Los Angeles County	Kern County
Obese Adults (BMI > 30) (Ages 18+)	37.8%	38.7%	33.0%	28.9%	40.2%
Overweight or Obese Teens (Ages 12 to 17)	39.8%	42.5%	26.6%	35.5%	42.8%
Overweight Children (Ages 2 to 11)	17.3%	16.6%	16.6%	12.1%	24.6%
Regular Physical Activity (Ages 5 to 17)	12.6%	11.4%	21.3%	14.3%	18.8%
Walked at least 150 Minutes in Past Week (Ages 18+)	33.0%	34.3%	32.1%	38.4%	33.6%

Source: AskCHIS Neighborhood Edition, California Health Interview Survey (CHIS), UCLA, 2016.

The City has undertaken several efforts to enhance safety for active modes, such as adopting the 2016 Complete Streets Plan, preparing an update to the 2012 Master Plan of Trails and Bikeways, the 2017 Safe Routes to School Master Plan, which identify enhancements to the walking and biking environment, and the current See and Be Seen campaign, which aims to educate school-aged children in active transportation safety.

**Park Access**

Parks, playgrounds, greenways, trails, and community open spaces help keep residents fit and healthy by providing access to places that support physical activity. Physical activity increases strength, flexibility, and endurance; relieves symptoms of depression and anxiety; improves mood; and enhances psychological well-being.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), only 25 percent of American adults engage in recommended levels of physical activity, and 29 percent engage in no leisure-time physical activity at all. This sedentary lifestyle is contributing to an increased incidence of obesity along with obesity-related diseases, such as high blood pressure, diabetes, congestive heart failure, and stroke. As one solution to the increased incidence of obesity, the CDC has called for more parks and playgrounds. Studies have shown that when people have access to parks, they exercise more. Parks provide children with opportunities for play, and play is critical in the development of muscle strength and coordination, language, and cognitive abilities. The city is currently in the process of rehabilitating the Lancaster Community Center located at 44611 Yucca Avenue. The center will provide residents with a one-stop-shop for necessary community services.

In Lancaster, 18 percent of City residents live within one-half mile—or a 10-minute walk—to one of the 14 City or County parks in the city limits. This number pales in comparison to the national average of 55 percent, but also to Palmdale and Victorville, where 35 percent and 27 percent of residents live within one-half mile of a park, respectively (Trust for Public Land, 2018). Figure 8 (Park Access) shows residential areas within one-quarter and one-half mile of a park, which emphasizes the lack of park access generally seen across the City. However, within the last decade the City has built two new parks; Whit Carter Park on Sierra Highway and American Heroes Park in Downtown Lancaster. Additionally, the City is in the process of upgrading many of its existing parks by adding new amenities, such as a skate park and accessible playground equipment. As a way to further encourage the development of recreational areas, the City is requiring new planned development to have useable open space for residents. These open space areas typically include amenities that encourage physical activity such as ball courts, tot lots, etc. and are not gated.

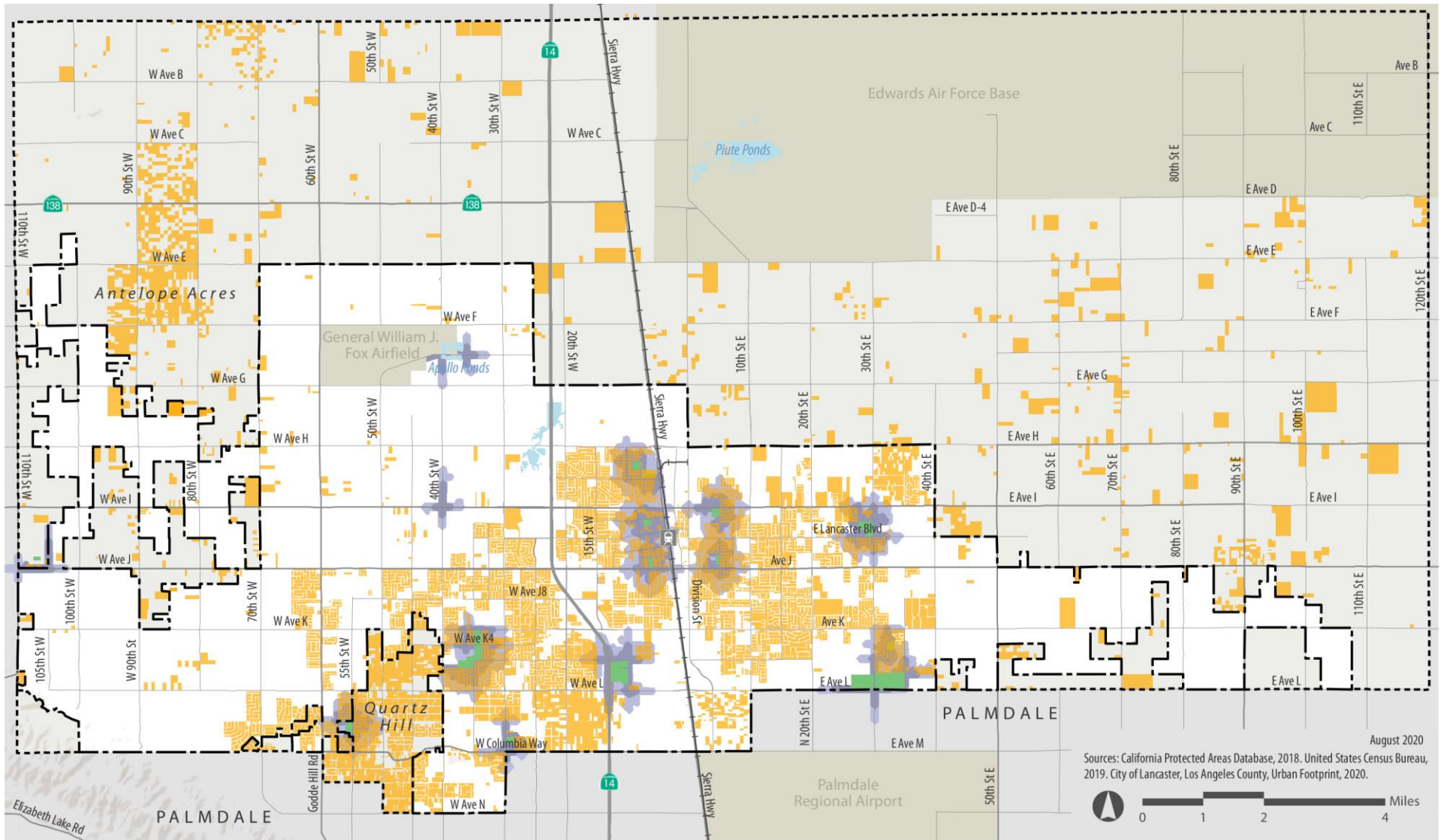


Sgt. Steve Owen Memorial Park



Lancaster National Soccer Center

**Figure 9: Park Access**



August 2020  
 Sources: California Protected Areas Database, 2018. United States Census Bureau, 2019. City of Lancaster, Los Angeles County, Urban Footprint, 2020.



**Access to Parks**

- Within 1/4-Mile Distance
- Within 1/2-Mile Distance

**Land Uses**

- Residential Use
- Parks

**Base Map Features**

- City of Lancaster Boundary
- Sphere of Influence
- Railways and Metrolink Station
- Airports and Military Installations

## City Health and Equity Initiatives

### Antelope Valley Healthy Community Commission

The Antelope Valley Healthy Community Commission consists of seven members appointed by the Mayor. Under the provisions of the City's Municipal Code, the Healthy Community Commission has been created with the purpose of advocating for and promoting better health and well-being for Antelope Valley residents.

### Lancaster Social Equity Commission

In 2020, the City of Lancaster formed a Social Equity Commission, with a purpose to cultivate and sustain diversity and inclusion through accountability and civilian oversight by fostering a fair and equitable justice system with transparency in all forms of government in the City of Lancaster.

### Healthy Homes Program

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Healthy Homes Program helps to make homes safer. The program provides homeowners and rental property owners with practical information about how to prevent health and safety hazards.

### Lancaster Health District

The Lancaster Health District encompasses 272 acres and would allow for the replacement of the existing hospital, development of new acute and subacute care facilities, continuum of care facilities, medical office space, office space, retail, restaurants, hotel and conference center and 1,600 housing units. It is envisioned as a 21st century health district designed to provide easily accessible, state-of-the-art health care to local residents in an environment that both encourages and facilitates active and healthy living. The project, which is centered around Antelope Valley Hospital, is envisioned as a walkable and bikeable district home to a variety of health care facilities and specialists. The City Council adopted the Lancaster Health District Master Plan in May 2021.

### Continuum of Care

The Continuum of Care is an effort to create a network of support that reaches those in crisis. At the same time, it seeks to put future generations on solid footing so they are able to deal with challenges and avoid crisis. This initiative aims to strengthen the community as a whole and find the best long-term solutions to public concerns.

## Key Takeaways and Policy Implications

- Only one disadvantaged community (Census Tract 9003), as defined by CalEnviroScreen 3.0 analysis, exists in the City and Sphere of Influence (SOI).
- The City and SOI score in the 91st percentile for ozone, which means the summed concentration of ozone is higher than 91 percent of census tracts in California. Certain portions of the City are also exposed to more solid waste, hazardous waste, and drinking water contamination than the rest of the State.
- Most areas in the City and SOI score in the top 25 percent of CalEnviroScreen 3.0 population characteristics indicators when compared to the rest of the State. Indicators with the highest scores across the area include rates of asthma, low birth weight, and cardiovascular disease. In terms of socioeconomic conditions, Lancaster residents experience relatively higher rates of poverty, unemployment, and housing burden.

- The City has healthier community conditions than just 20.9 percent of other California cities. Compared to other High Desert communities, Lancaster scores in the middle of the pack. Lancaster health conditions fair better than most communities in Kern County while falling below many communities in Los Angeles County.
- Generally, communities on the west side of Lancaster have healthier community conditions than communities in the central and eastern areas.
- Health insurance coverage in the City is close to 95 percent, above the County's average (approximately 90 percent). Health insurance coverage for foreign born and minority residents is also higher than County averages.
- Generally, residents have good access to local hospitals and urgent care facilities. However, many poorer residents lack such access because of financial and socioeconomic constraints.
- The proportion of residents that receive food stamps and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is similar to Los Angeles County averages.
- Most residents in the western portion of the City live further than one mile from a grocery store.
- Only 18 percent of residents live within one-half mile—or a 10-minute walk—to one of the 14 City or County parks in the city limits. This number pales in comparison to the national average of 55 percent, but also to Palmdale and Victorville, where 35 percent and 27 percent of residents live within one-half mile of a park, respectively (Trust for Public Land, 2018).
- Park access is strong near the center of Lancaster but lacking elsewhere.